

the VICTORIAN

FAIRY COMPANION



LUNAEA WEATHERSTONE
art by GARY A. LIPPINCOTT



KNIGHT OF SUMMER



About the Author



LUNAEA WEATHERSTONE is a priestess, writer, teacher, and tarot counselor who has been serving the Pagan community for more than twenty-five years, since her days as owner/editor of *SageWoman* magazine. As Grove Mother for the Sisterhood of the Silver Branch, she offers year-long online programs in goddess spirituality. She has been working with the tarot for more than forty years.

About the Artist



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VI • THE FAIRY BRIDE



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FAIRY ♡ COMPANION

Lunaea Weatherstone
art by Gary A. Lippincott

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To the spirits of Arthur Rackham and J. M. Barrie.

—LUNAEA

To all of the magical souls.

—GARY



NINE OF SUMMER





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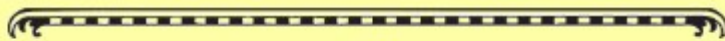


Introduction

*Faërie Court and Elfin Throng,
Unto whom the groves belong,
And by laws of ancient date
Found in scrolls of Faërie Fate
Stream and fount are dedicate,
Wheresoe're your feet today
Far from haunts of men may stray,
We adjure you, stay no more
Exiles on an alien shore,
But with spells of magic birth,
Once again make glad the earth!*



A. E. WAITE





The Victorians took their fairies seriously. And the era's fascination with the fantastical and the otherworldly wasn't limited to children. Fairy art, literature, and theatre were hugely popular in the nineteenth century, as were stories of real-life encounters with fairies. These interactions with humans ranged from a fleeting glimpse of a fairy in a boggy dell to being stolen by fairies and held in enchantment for what seemed like only one night, while the world outside aged a hundred years. As late as 1917, when two young girls claimed to have photographed fairies in their garden, a large portion of the public (including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle) had no problem believing them. Some people still do.

The Victorian obsession with fairies was, in part, a response to the increasing onslaught of industry, technology, and machines. Many feared that the quiet country life with its ancient roots in nature was disappearing—and taking the fairies with it. And if the world of the Victorians seemed to be rapidly changing in pace and modernity, how much more so is our present world? When we step back in time to the world of the Victorian fairies, we find our own roots in timeless magic.

There are many doors to Fairy. For the Victorians, one of these doors opened into a fairy realm that looked very much like their own world. It is this world that the Victorian Fairy Tarot invites you to explore. As seen through a Victorian magnifying glass, the fairies' pastimes and pursuits reveal a rich society in miniature, half-glimpsed among the flowers at the bottom of the garden. We observe them going about their business from season to season, and their moods—distilled and concentrated in their small beings—varying with those seasons. In spring the fairies are

restless, active, filled with creative energy. In summer they are more emotional and sensual, delighting in the joys of the heart and body. In autumn they are restless once more, but this time with an eye toward the coming cold, a gathering-in energy that manifests in work and harvest. In winter they are irritable and quarrelsome when kept indoors and fearful of threats when abroad in the bleak, bitterly cold landscape.

Only one card in the Victorian Fairy Tarot shows a mortal man: the Fool. In the rest of the cards, you are looking into the fairies' world at their level and joining in as one of their society. Imagine this, if you dare: a soft English twilight descends, and you step outside to savor the sweet evening. Walking across the grass toward the dusky trees, you catch a faint phrase of fleeting melody, as if a tiny harp has been struck nearby. As you enter the wood, the sound comes again—a haunting strain from echoing pipes, eerie music the like of which you have never heard. It draws you further in, beckoning you to follow a path lined with bluebells, luminous in the dusk. Suddenly you find yourself in an azure pool of these enchanted flowers, and you feel small tugs at your clothing and your hair. You have found the Fairy Wood...and the fairies have found *you*.

Victorians saw fairies in many lights: from a romantic and escapist point of view, from a place of fear, from longing and lust, from a desire for innocence and childlike wonder. We see fairies as we wish to see them. The veil between the worlds is thin enough to cross over, if only you believe.

Some Facts about Fairies

Fairies, like humans, have many different physical forms, cultural customs, and beliefs. You will get to know the Victorian fairies better through the cards, of course, but here are a few frequently asked questions by those who would journey in their land.

Can the fairies fly?

Yes, all of the Victorian fairies are winged and can fly. But fairy flight is achieved by a combination of physical and emotional elements, and certain conditions can keep a fairy earthbound, such as injury, starvation, fright, self-doubt (it helps if you believe in them), or just being in a really bad mood.

Are all fairies very small?

No. Some fairies, such as the majestic Irish sidhe, are taller than humans. Other fairies are shapeshifters and adapt their size to suit their immediate needs (slipping through keyholes, for example). The Victorian fairies in this deck, however, are all quite small—typically between 7 and 9 inches (17 to 22 centimeters) for an adult fairy.

Are fairies immortal?

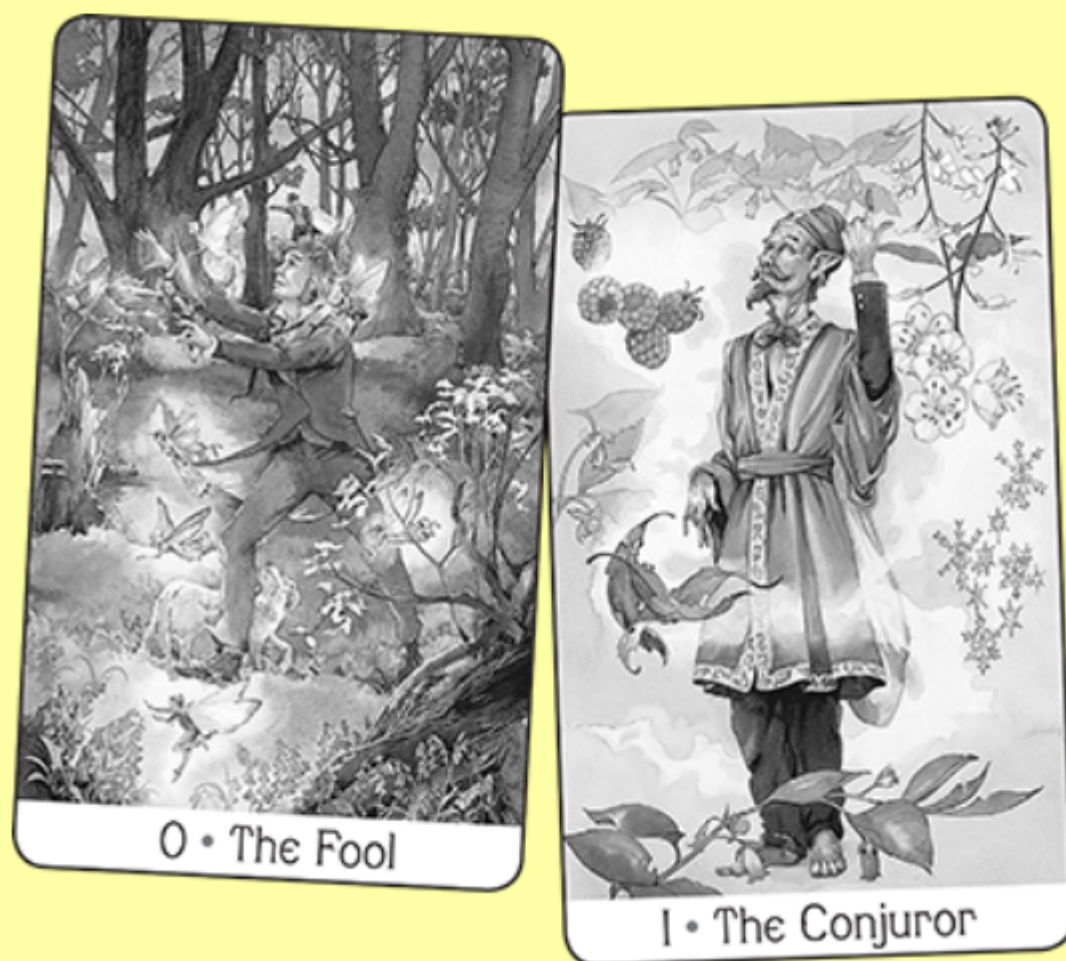
Yes and no. Some types of fairies do live forever, while others have lives that are fleeting and fragile. The Victorian fairies visited in this deck age very slowly over many years. The elders seem to stop aging at a certain point, and it is unknown whether the fairies ever die of old age. It doesn't seem to concern them, so the general conclusion is that they do not. Environmental conditions such as droughts or blizzards can weaken fairies to the point of collapse, but they do not appear to be fatal. Illnesses and injuries can cause great pain, but again do not seem to cause permanent damage. Observation has indicated that the only way these fairies die is by sudden violence, such as murder, animal attack, or fairy war.

The Structure of the Deck

All tarot decks are made up of two parts: the Major Arcana and the Minor Arcana (*arcana* is from a word that means “secrets”).

The Major Arcana

The Major cards have names like the Empress, Death, and the Moon. When a Major Arcana card comes up in a reading, it can be interpreted as an important event, life experience, or soul work. The Majors show universal archetypes that ask you to pay attention and receive a significant lesson along your journey through life.



The twenty-two cards are traditionally numbered one through twenty-one, with the Fool card as zero. Some tarot readers use these numbers as additional tools for interpretation, associating them with numbers in the Minor Arcana, adding them together to

find cards that are related, and so on. You can also completely disregard the numbers if you choose, and simply let the name of the card and the imagery inform your interpretation. It is one of tarot's pleasures that you can always find techniques that best fit your own cosmology. There is never an end to the things you can learn from (and about) tarot!

The Major Arcana cards are:

TRADITIONAL...VICTORIAN FAIRY TAROT

The Fool...The Fool
The Magician...The Conjuror
The High Priestess...The Seeress
The Empress...The Empress
The Emperor...The Emperor
The Hierophant...The Vicar
The Lovers...The Fairy Bride
The Chariot...The Chariot
Strength...Fortitude
The Hermit...The Hermit
The Wheel of Fortune...The Wheel of Time
Justice...The Magistrate
The Hanged Man...The Hanging Fairy
Death...Death
Temperance...Temperance
The Devil...Goblin Market
The Tower...The Burning Oak
The Star...The Stars
The Moon...The Moon
The Sun...The Sun
Judgement...Awakening
The World...The Worlds

The Minor Arcana

The Minor Arcana cards are in four suits like a deck of playing cards and are often interpreted as relating to day-to-day experiences and passing events. In this deck the traditional meanings of the cards are retained, but the four suits have been newly envisioned as four Fairy Courts.

The concept of Fairy Courts has been explored by fairyologists for many years and appears often in Victorian fairy lore and art. English Victorian society was strongly hierarchical and influenced by the royal aristocracy. Whether the Fairy Courts took their cues from the mortals or vice versa, who can say? Examples of Fairy Courts include the Seelie and Unseelie Courts (made up of good fairies and bad fairies, respectively), the Fairy Court of Love, the Trooping Faeries, and the seasonal Fairy Courts. These seasonal courts are the ones we visit in the Victorian Fairy Tarot. The Minor Arcana suits are:

TRADITIONAL...VICTORIAN FAIRY TAROT

Wands...The Spring Court
Cups...The Summer Court
Pentacles...The Autumn Court
Swords...The Winter Court

The Fairy Courts are made up of fourteen cards each: ace through ten and the Herald, Knight, Queen, and King. (For a general description of each court, see the ace for that season.)

How to Use the Cards

It may seem simplistic, but the most important thing about working with tarot cards is to really look at them. Take your time and enter the picture, imagining yourself within its landscape. Then close your eyes and envision the card again, remembering what you have seen. Often the most important part of the card's imagery will be what lingers in your mind. Let the fairies come forth—and they may be fairies who aren't even pictured on the card! They will lead you further into the land of Fairy, where adventure and illumination await. (If you are worried about not being able to return to your everyday life, hold an iron nail in your hand, as the fairies cannot abide iron.)

After you have spent time looking at the card, read the description for further insights into its meaning. Tarot is very subjective! Use your intuition to find the messages the cards hold for you and you alone. The section in each description called “when you get this card in a reading” is written as if the card concerns you personally, but consider whether it might refer to another person instead or perhaps isn’t about a person at all but the situation itself. For example, the Empress card symbolizes motherly love and care, which could be about your own ability to give such love, your need for such love, or an opportunity to use motherly qualities in the situation you are asking about (among many other possible interpretations). Let the descriptions be a starting point for your answer, not the entirety of your answer.

One of the best ways to learn any new tarot deck is to go through the cards quickly and say aloud a one-word description of what you see. This flashcard exercise can be done over and over, with more revealed about the cards each time you do it. Even tarot experts can benefit from this freshening technique. It’s easy to get stuck in what you think you know about a card’s meaning, and by working with the cards in a spontaneous dialogue, you let them tell you what they want to convey. It also gets your analytical mind out of the way so your intuition can come through, and intuition is at the heart of all divination.

For more ways to work with your Victorian Fairy Tarot, see the Spreads chapter.

About Reversals

When using the cards in a reading, you can choose to read them all upright or to consider what it means when a card is reversed (upside down). The Victorian Fairy Tarot was intended to be read upright, but if you enjoy using reversals, by all means do so! The

important thing is to be consistent. Let your cards know whether you will be considering reversals or not, so they know which way to present themselves— and so you won't second-guess yourself. If you decide you will read all cards upright, then turn any upside-down cards right-side up when you interpret the reading. An excellent book on exploring the reversed meanings of tarot cards is *The Complete Book of Tarot Reversals* by renowned tarot master Mary K. Greer.

The Care and Feeding of Your Deck

There are many schools of thought about the “proper” way to care for a tarot deck. In my view, the proper way is whatever feels right for you. If you feel the cards retain their energy best in their original box, then that is perfectly correct. If you prefer to keep your cards in an embroidered bag or silk scarf or hand-carved sandalwood box adorned with jewels, that is perfect too.

The crucial thing is to treat your cards with respect. Put them away carefully—with thanks!—when you are finished with them. You may want to store them with special crystals or other stones to help clarify and enhance their energy. Staurolite crystals (also known as fairy crosses) are particularly good for journeying in the fairy world and symbolize the place where the fairy and mortal worlds intersect.

You can “feed” your deck by placing it in moonlight or on a bed of fresh thyme, which is sacred to the fairy folk. On the two nights of the year when the entire fairy host rides forth between the worlds, Samhain (Halloween) and Beltane (May Eve), put your tarot deck on a windowsill with a tiny dish of cream and a silver pin as an offering, and ask the fair folk to bless the cards as they pass.

The Victorian Language of Flowers

Throughout this book you will notice references to particular flowers and their meanings, for the Victorians had a complex floral language. For more on this, please see the appendix.



***Where shall point the Elfin wing?
Worlds of pure imagining;
Then where virtue rules the heart,
Thence the Fairies ne'er depart!***



A. E. WAITE



0 • THE FOOL

0 • The Fool

Come away, O human child!
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand...



W. B. YEATS

It is twilight, the between-time at the edge of day and night when the veil between the worlds draws thin. A mortal man has innocently wandered into the bluebell wood. Where bluebells grow in azure pools of trembling blossoms, the fairy host gathers, and any mortal foolish enough to stray from the path may be captured by enchantment. To the man's amazement, he finds himself surrounded by fairies who entice and entreat him to leave the human world behind. His faithful dog senses possible danger and would pull his master away from this place, but the call is too compelling—the adventure must be undertaken. The man steps forward into the world of Fairy.

The Fool's journey through the tarot represents our own journey through life. Each experience, each encounter, each opportunity to express our soul's purpose leads us forward toward growth and wisdom. The Fool is an innocent explorer, without expectations or assumptions. He is moving into a new world with each step, his eyes open to seeing wonders. It may seem foolish to move impulsively into the unknown—or is it foolish to resist? Life's adventure is lived to the fullest by those who dare to heed the call.

The Fool is the only human shown in the Victorian Fairy Tarot, and he represents all of us as we enter into the world of Fairy. From here on, we are dwelling among the fairy folk, a world in miniature that we see through their eyes.

When you get this card in a reading:

It is time to take a leap of faith. Trust that you are being led toward a deeper engagement with your purpose and that it will lead to great things. You may not be able to see the path before you for more than a few steps, but taking those steps indicates your willingness to fully live your life.

In a nutshell: adventure, openness, beginnings, wonder, innocence



I • The Conjuror

The universe is full of magical things
patiently waiting for our wits
to grow sharper.



EDEN PHILLPOTTS

All fairies have magical power to some degree, but a few make it their vocation and deepen their expertise. Here we see a fairy Conjuror casting a spell. He is influenced by the mysterious East, that empire beyond his homeland from whence come exotic practices that enhance his innate powers. The source of fairy magic is nature, and the Conjuror begins his spell by invoking the elemental powers of the four seasons: the regenerative power of spring, the ripening power of summer, the transformative power of autumn, and the releasing power of winter. Using just a flash of imagination and the intense focus of his will, he is creating something from nothing. His flower is enchanter's nightshade, a plant of sorcery, growing in the shadows where most plants would not thrive. To this he adds belladonna, whose message is "silence." The Conjuror knows the importance of secrecy: to keep silent is a vital part of magic.

The Conjuror's eyes are open and intent upon his spell-working, his hands moving in a magical gesture of power. The true magician doesn't need tools or props, for the magic comes from within. To make magic is to be perfectly connected with the flow of the universe, putting yourself within that flow rather than blocking it. Fairies are magic because they are part of nature, an expression of it—and so are we. The Conjuror always has the choice to use his powers for good or for ill. He knows that what he puts forth will return to him as inevitably as the turning of the seasons.

When you get this card in a reading:

You have everything you need to manifest your desires; you just need to put it in motion. First get clear about what you want—focus your intention. Then apply the power of your will to bring about the necessary change. Remember to always use your magic for good, and never work to bend anyone else's will to your own.

In a nutshell: willpower, intention, connection to nature, magic



II • The Seeress

Her eyes are full of dreams; and in her ears
There is the rustle of immortal wings;
And ever and anon the slow breeze bears
The mystic murmur of the songs she sings.



JOHN PAYNE

A fairy Seeress sits at her crystal ball and opens herself to receive its visions, inviting and invoking them with her whole being. The crystal begins to glow, and shapes form within its swirling depths. The Seeress is connected to the spirits that surround the living and communicate mystical wisdom to those who are attuned. There are things that can only be seen through inner sight and only by those who welcome the visions without fear. The fairy Seeress is a medium, a conduit for wisdom, who can pass along messages to others. The *Amanita muscaria* mushroom that serves as her altar dispels any resistance to the messages coming through. The Seeress performs her rites in a thicket of wild honeysuckle, a plant that is beneficial to psychic powers and clairvoyance.

The spiritual counterpart to the Seeress in the Victorian fairy community is the Vicar, who freely offers his messages of faith to all, in a place easily found and always accessible. In contrast, the Seeress must be sought out in her sacred space, and she offers her insights only to those who are willing to accept and believe in things that are intangible. This is essential if true seeing is to be achieved. The spirits are reluctant to appear when doubt and skepticism are present. But for those who can bring an open mind and receptive spirit, much will be revealed.

When you get this card in a reading:

Trust what you know. Do not second-guess yourself. Your inner knowing gives wise guidance. Do not be afraid to look deeply. If you limit yourself to only the logical and earthly, you may miss an opportunity to grow in wisdom and understanding.

In a nutshell: spirituality, mysticism, seeing the unseen, lifting the veil



III • The Empress

Accomplishments were native to her mind,
Like precious pearls within a clasping shell,
And winning grace her every act defined,
Like sunshine shedding beauty where it fell.



SARAH JOSEPHA HALE

The fairy Empress stands for a formal portrait in her throne room, surrounded by some of her beloved children. Like Victoria herself, her regal nobility is matched by her feminine graces. The seasons come and go, but the Empress's majesty is eternal. The scepter she carries is a magic wand that bestows abundant blessings of sustaining love. She knows her duty and accepts it graciously and without false modesty. The Empress is not reluctant to wield power, but it is power wielded with generosity and devotion to her family and her subjects.

The Empress represents abundance, fertility, marriage, and nurturance. She is the mother of her empire, whatever that may comprise. Her concerns are the improvement and care of her people, including their wealth, health, and progeny. She seeks to expand her empire not for her own gain, but to better the lives of those under her care. The Empress is the embodiment of sustaining love, comfort, and sacred feminine power.

When you get this card in a reading:

Others look to you for tender care and maternal guidance, and your own heart is fulfilled by this offering of love. You find your greatest happiness in intimate connections with your family and extended family, and your gentle power empowers others as well. Honor these aspects of yourself, and gracefully accept the adoration of those who see your true majesty.

In a nutshell: generosity, fertility, motherhood, beauty, feminine power



IV • The Emperor

Make not thy will thy law; believe thy people
Thy children all; so shalt thou kindly mix
Their interests with thy own...



C. JOHNSON

The fairy Emperor stands for a formal portrait in his throne room. With him are two of his many children, including his heir, who holds the scepter of authority as if trying it on for size. The Emperor is greatly concerned with future generations, and the things he builds are meant to last even beyond his vast lifetime. His eye is on distant horizons as well as at home. He holds plans in his hands that will be for the benefit of everyone in his realm.

The Empress provides for the emotional well-being of her people as well as their physical needs. The Emperor, her consort, is more concerned with intellectual improvements, such as expansion of the empire's civilization, arts, architecture, and industry. He is also more interested in the concept of power than the Empress, and he knows that their power to rule is given by divine right, not a popularity contest. The duty that comes from such high birth is a serious matter. When much is given in power, much is expected in responsibility.

When you get this card in a reading:

Others look to you for leadership and inspiration, and you may find yourself in a position of power over others. Use this power wisely, as a loving father would, to benefit those who place their trust and confidence in you. What you do today can have repercussions for years to come, so act with responsibility and forethought.

In a nutshell: leadership, masculine power, building for future generations, *noblesse oblige*



V • The Vicar

Now the good Vicar passes from his gate
Serene, with long white hair; and in his eye
Burns the clear spirit that hath conquer'd Fate,
And felt the wings of immortality;
His heart is throng'd with great imaginings,
And tender mercies—while the Blackbird sings.



FREDERICK TENNYSON

Among the roots of a venerable oak tree, the fairy Vicar offers teachings of spiritual matters to his fond congregation. Like all communities, the fairies share common beliefs and traditions. The Vicar is the authority on these collective ideas. The fairies look to him for guidance and as a keeper of the ancient fairy lore that forms the foundation of their society. He teaches, leads, inspires, and encourages personal growth. He also encourages questioning, as a mind that is awake will always be alive to matters of the spirit.

The Vicar is an authority figure but not a forbidding one. The relationship between the Vicar and the fairy community is comfortable and mutually respectful. The Vicar's authority comes from a genuine place of knowledge and understanding, rather than from any need to exert his opinion over others. For this reason the fairies trust and love their Vicar, and know that their concerns will find a safe and open-hearted reception with him.

When you get this card in a reading:

Offer your wisdom with a sense of humility, rather than laying down the law in a dogmatic way. Beliefs that are shared with respect reach a more receptive audience. Build bridges through the sharing of lore, traditions, and spiritual customs.

In a nutshell: teaching, religion, true authority, tradition, wise counsel



VI • The Fairy Bride

Play every string in Love's sweet lyre—
Set all its music flowing;
Be air, and dew, and light, and fire,
To keep the soul-flower growing.



FRANCES SARGENT OSGOOD

Legends of encounters between mortals and fairies tell of the Fairy Bride, the beautiful fairy maiden for love of whom a mortal will abandon all he knows and remain in the fairy world forever. (In other tales, the fairy leaves her people to live among humans.) The motif of the Fairy Bride who marries a mortal and brings him into her realm symbolizes surrendering to the power of true love and the equal relationship that such love bestows. For the Victorians, marriage was for a lifetime. For the immortal fairies, it was literally forever. To join with the beloved in the hope of eternal love is a choice not to be undertaken lightly.

The Fairy Bride offers divine love, the melding of hearts and minds that soul mates know. Her flowers are the forget-me-not, myrtle, and bridal roses, all symbolic of deep and abiding love in the language of flowers. Victorian ladies wore these blooms to signify their readiness to commit to their beloved. The roses in their stages of bud, half-blown, and full-blown express the heart opening and the willingness to be vulnerable in love.

When you get this card in a reading:

The Fairy Bride represents a choice to commit to whatever your beloved is. This may be another person, a cause or creative project, a spiritual path, or even yourself. To love is a courageous choice, as a heart that is open is a heart that can break. This card affirms that what you are feeling is worthy, and that the object of your love is worthy as well.

In a nutshell: love, passion, choices, soul mates, belief in love's destiny



VII • The Chariot

Would you seek and find the secret of success
With mortal kind? Then, up from idleness!
Up—up! all fame, all power lies in this golden text:
This is my hour—and not the next nor next!



GEORGE FREDERICK CAMERON

Racing was popular among the Victorian nobility, gentry, and country folk alike. The partnership between the driver and his steed took great skill, strength, and daring. Among the Victorian fairies, cross-country racing is not limited to earthly bounds, and chariots are a fairy tradition going back to Queen Mab herself.

Here we see a fairy race in full feather, as it were. The chariots are drawn by magpies, their glossy black-and-white wings wide-spread to catch the summer winds, their exuberant drivers urging them on. These are one-fairy vehicles, not a team sport. The fairies who engage in such races have an independent spirit and a strong ego that will not admit defeat. Our charioteer knows he is in the lead and doesn't look back but joyously surges toward the finish line. His high spirits and confidence will carry the day.

When you get this card in a reading:

The Chariot is the card of successful self-determination. It's time to seize the reins of your life in both hands and drive toward your destiny. There is no need for input from others—indeed, their influence will only confuse matters now. Keep your eye on your goal and move forward with confidence toward certain victory.

In a nutshell: success, confidence, self-governance, independent achievement



VIII • Fortitude

Brave spirits are a balsam to themselves:
There is a nobleness of mind that heals
Wounds beyond salves.



WILLIAM CARTWRIGHT

A fairy beekeeper sits among her flock, communing with them and caring for their needs. Although the bees have the potential to harm her, she knows they never will. She is in her element, her skill as a caregiver for these productive creatures blending perfectly with their skill as honey-makers for the fairy community. Their honey is drawn from red clover, a flower whose symbolic meaning is "industry." Both bees and beekeeper are deeply happy in their work, with the happiness that comes from knowing they are using the strengths they were born with. This is their forte, their true purpose.

The fairy may have had to summon up her courage at first to work with the bees. It takes strength to subdue fear and follow your heart's desire. But being in a state of fortitude means knowing you will blossom when you are serving your gifts. The courage this beekeeper needed to learn her craft is now manifested in deep calm. She is in a state of perfect harmony with nature. The bees sense this, too, and they know that where this beekeeper dwells is their own place of peace and power.

When you get this card in a reading:

Fortitude means strengthening your resolve and gathering your skills to achieve a higher purpose. Some talent or gift is ready to be fully expressed. It may require courage at first, but you have the spiritual strength to follow through. Tame your fears, and make them work for you to strengthen your sense of self-esteem and faith.

In a nutshell: strength, courage, talents, natural and spiritual power



IX • The Hermit

Down a winding glade with leaflets wall'd,
With an odorous dewy dark imbued;
Rose, and maple, and hazel call'd
Me into the shadowy solitude...



RODEN BERKELEY WRIOTHESLEY NOEL

High in an oak tree, deep in the dark forest, a fairy Hermit sits in studious retreat in his library. His little owl companion keeps watch to give warning of any who may approach. Solitude is essential for this fairy as he immerses himself in the pursuit of understanding. The Hermit is a poet, and poetry requires time to consider nuance, symbolism, and metaphor. His goal is to make his life a poem, even if he is the only one to hear it. To this end, he devotes his attention to studying the wisdom of the ages. Though he has shut himself away from the world, he is even more aware of it from the vantage point of perspective. Taking the time to consider patterns, history, and the workings of the ages, the Hermit is as far-seeing as his owl friend.

Visitors are rare, but sincere seekers are welcome, and the light of the lantern shines among the branches to light the path. Those fairies who make the journey to seek his counsel must be willing to see with poet's eyes. Casual chatter and mundane concerns are left behind when in the company of the Hermit. Even among the fairies, the pursuit of wisdom is a timeless experience that is to be treated with respect.

When you get this card in a reading:

Your instincts are telling you to retreat from the world and focus on your own work. Listen to that inner calling, as it is leading you deeper into wisdom and creativity. Don't make it too easy for others to distract you now; set boundaries that protect your time and energy. You are being drawn toward a time of private reflection that will ultimately benefit the wider world.

In a nutshell: solitude, study, perspective, a time of deepening



X • The Wheel of Time

And what is nature's order but the rhyme
Whereto the worlds keep time,
And all things move with all things from their prime?



WILLIAM WATSON

The Wheel of Time is in constant motion, turning from moment to moment, hour to hour throughout the day and from season to season through the years. The fairies live these changes through the ascension of the seasonal Fairy Courts, one court coming to the fore to rule the part of the year where it is most powerful, then retiring until the Wheel has turned again. There is a gentle (and sometimes not so gentle) rivalry between the seasonal courts, as chill autumn winds bluster in to strip away the last of the summer flowers or as the strengthening spring sun melts away winter's icy hold. The Wheel of Time symbolizes these inevitable changes, turned by the hands of the Fairy of Day and the Fairy of Night. Round and round spins the Wheel of Time, with timeless eternity at its center.

When you get this card in a reading:

It is said that the one thing we can always count on is that things will change. It is to be hoped they will change for the better, but challenges are often what bring growth. The Wheel of Time reminds you to look at the bigger picture and to keep a sense of perspective as you deal with life's changes. Wherever you are on the Wheel, you will not be there for long. Be patient, and let time work its magic.

In a nutshell: change, cycles, perspective, the passage of time



XI • The Magistrate

Ah, justice, who evades her? Her scales reach every heart;
The action and the motive, she weigheth each apart;
And none who swerve from right or truth
Can 'scape her penalty!



SARAH JOSEPHA HALE

While some types of fairies have a reputation for being lawless and irresponsible, the Victorian fairies have a social structure with rules for conduct that echo those of the mortal world. Overseeing this order is the Magistrate. He is also called the justice of the peace, and preserving that peace is his responsibility. When all parts of the community are working together with fairness and mutual respect, peace will prevail. When things get out of order, the Magistrate calls upon his knowledge of the law and his wise intelligence to make decisions that will best benefit all. Common sense is at the heart of fairy justice, rooted as the fairies are in nature and its cooperative interweavings.

Here we see the Magistrate musing over ancient scrolls containing fairy laws and commentary. His flower is rudbeckia, whose meaning is "justice." He will not be hurried or influenced by the whims and caprices of fashion. He is addressed as "Your Honor," and it is honor that is at the heart of all his decisions. Firmly but with compassion, the Magistrate lays down the law.

When you get this card in a reading:

To achieve true justice, all dealings must be fair and ethical, with everyone's welfare at heart. Think about your actions and whether they pass the test for truth and honor. If you want others to treat you with respect, begin by behaving that way yourself. Outcomes are strongly influenced by beginnings, so maintain your integrity at every step along the way. Face the consequences of your actions.

In a nutshell: justice, integrity, fair dealings, legal and ethical matters



XII • The Hanging Fairy

Now haply shall the vision trance our eyes,
By heedless mortals all too rarely scanned...



EDWARD CRACROFT LEFROY

A fairy has become caught in a spider web spun among the tall stems of opium poppies. Though he struggled at first to break free, the poppies' seductive essence wove itself into his consciousness and he surrendered to its embrace. His mind is now open to visions beyond even the keen sight of fairies. Amazed and wondering, the Hanging Fairy surrenders to the play of imagination that has overtaken him. He is not alone in this intoxication: in Victorian times the lure of the poppy captured many who sought inspiration beyond their mortal sight, including Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Charles Dickens, Oscar Wilde, and Edgar Allan Poe.

The Hanging Fairy cannot remain entangled in the web of dreams forever. But when he makes his way back to his everyday life, he will be changed. Something new will have seeded itself in his mind, as surely as the infinitesimal poppy seeds will bloom again. He will never look at life the same way as before.

When you get this card in a reading:

It is time to look at your world from a different point of view, to stand old notions on their head. Your spiritual growth demands a new vision. Release your hold on what you thought was true, and open to the possibilities of worlds beyond your ken. This does not require the poppy's assistance: the doors of perception will open at the slightest touch when your spirit is ready to take the next step.

In a nutshell: surrender, vision, letting imagination carry you where it will



XIII • Death

The soul that makes soil sacred,
and from earth,
Triumphant plucks the doom of death
that came with birth.



WILLIAM GILMORE SIMMS

Alas, poor wren! In a bleak winter landscape, a group of grieving fairies mourn a dead bird. It has been killed by humans in the St. Stephen's Day tradition in which boys hunt a winter wren in the woods and bear it back triumphantly as a symbol of the dying year. What is merriment for the mortals is aching sorrow for the fairies, who rarely know death for themselves but experience it sharply in their connection to all of nature. The holly berries' message of immortality and rebirth is echoed in the tiny drops of blood that have been shed so carelessly. Some of the mourners have taken a feather from their fallen friend as a memento. Not just a remembrance of the bird itself, but also as a *memento mori*—a reminder that life is precious and that every moment should be lived to the fullest, even for those whose days know no end.

The Death card has a similar message to the Wheel of Time: all things change. The focus here is more on endings than on the cycle of renewal, however. We must bid farewell to the things that are no longer of this world, release them with thanks, and trust that the pattern has meaning that may not be apparent to us now. The fairies mourn the dead wren with full hearts and release its spirit on the chill winter winds.

When you get this card in a reading:

Drawing this card is not a message of impending death but rather a reminder that life does have an end point, as does almost everything else, and transformation and change are inevitable. Attuning yourself to the immediate moment and its gifts is the blessing of mortality. If nothing ever ended, we would become complacent, as the fairies sometimes do until a reminder such as this comes. Release what no longer serves you, and embrace the vital aspects of your life with renewed gratefulness.

In a nutshell: mortality, transformation, release, the natural cycles of life and death



XIV • Temperance

The dregs and foam together
Unite to crown the cup—
And well we know the weal and woe
That fill life's chalice up!



ELIZABETH F. ELLET

A fairy gathers anise for dreams and fennel for strength, then distills them with wormwood for bitterness, the sorrow that makes joy all the more welcome. Then, drop by drop, she tempers her creation with dew, making a drink that blesses rather than destroys. She is the Green Fairy, the creator of absinthe, who brings visions of bliss to those who use her creation with temperance, and brings madness or even death to those who are out of balance with her powerful potion. The key is to dance between the two extremes, as the Green Fairy adds the purity of water to the alchemy of herbs and magic that is her gift.

Among the Victorians, the temperance movement was a reaction against rampant drunkenness that was so damaging to domestic family life. Society didn't object to drinking in general, just to excess and abuse. Imbibing in moderation was acceptable, and even encouraged. But to lose your self-respect in debauchery was seen as the lowest form of humanity's degradation. Among the fairies, moderation isn't really a high priority, but a delicate balance of perfect grace is highly valued. Absinthe, with its reputation for inducing madness in those who overindulge, is a fairy creation and should be taken as the fairies intended: tempered with pure water, sip by tiny sip.

When you get this card in a reading:

To be temperate doesn't mean to be staid or lacking in daring and creativity. Revelations can inspire genius, but discipline and moderation bring them into manifestation. Don't go too far in one direction or another—spurning all glimpses of magical inspiration is just as damaging as indulging to the point of destruction.

In a nutshell: moderation, balance, spiritual harmony, alchemy



XV • Goblin Market

We must not look at goblin men,
We must not buy their fruits:
Who knows upon what soil they fed
Their hungry thirsty roots?



CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

Follow the half-obscured path through tangled thickets and twisted trees to the Goblin Market. Everything that could tempt a fairy's exquisite taste is offered here: luscious fruits with an eerie glow, perfumes and elixirs of secret origin, laces and silks to wrap a fairy lady in wisps of beauty. Jewels shimmer in the candlelight as the mesmerized customer is drawn closer, closer, into the market's dark recesses, where the goblin merchant awaits. There is no escape once a fairy has fallen into his grasping clutches. What seemed beautiful and necessary is revealed as a trap. The fruits do not nourish but only create more hunger. The fine garments and sweet perfumes burn fairy skin, and the jewels turn to coarse pebbles. *Too late, too late*, croons the goblin. *You should have looked before you bought*.

If the Temperance card is about pleasure in balance, the Goblin Market knows no such restraint. This card speaks of embracing the dark side to the point of completely forswearing the light. The goblin's gleaming wares are only illusions and will never bring true happiness.

When you get this card in a reading:

The situation has become damaging to your soul, and you must break free, no matter how seductive it may seem. This card may represent a destructive relationship or psychological or physical abuse. It is also a card of addiction, whether to a substance, a habit, a person, or an idea. Resist temptation, and find a way back to the light.

In a nutshell: soullessness, bondage, captured by darkness, destructive addiction



XVI • THE BURNING OAK

XVI • The Burning Oak

The thunder bursts!—its rolling might
Seems the firm hills to shake;
And in terrific splendor bright,
The gathering lightnings break.



FELICIA HEMANS

Oaks in England can live for a thousand years, so they are a popular choice among fairies who want a stable home in which to raise their families. But even the most ancient and deep-rooted of trees can be destroyed in an instant. Such an oak has been struck by sudden summer lightning. The night's peaceful quiet is shattered with a thunderous warning, and then chaos and panic engulf the tree as swiftly as the hungry flames. Blasted from their sleep, the terrified fairies flee for their lives, abandoning even their most precious possessions.

Nothing like this catastrophe was foreseen or prepared for. Life can't be lived in constant fear against such disasters, especially when experience has shown that all is safe and secure. And yet, everything has changed faster than could have been imagined. All that matters now is the well-being of the fairies and their loved ones, who must be comforted and soothed in the face of such devastating loss. Someday, from the ashes, a new tree will be born.

When you get this card in a reading:

Inevitable change shakes your foundations and breaks up old patterns so that new ones can emerge. This often happens when you don't make change of your own volition. The universe has a way of forcing the issue, and it's not always pleasant. If the change is still in the making, take the initiative yourself to avoid a rude awakening.

In a nutshell: destruction, sudden change, the fall of established patterns



XVII • The Stars

The stars, the soft stars! When they glitter above us,
I gaze on their beams with a feeling divine...
The darker the heaven, the brighter they shine.



AMELIA WELBY

Under the wide and starry sky, a fairy lady contemplates the cosmos. Though she is a tiny creature, her spirit is as vast as the heavens and as brilliant as the stars themselves. Knowing this, she renews her faith in the connection of all things. The flow of creation is in each being, in the stones and in the streams, in the nodding flowers and drifting clouds. There is a pattern to the universe, though we may not be able to comprehend its meaning. Though as numerous as the stars, each living spirit is uniquely irreplaceable. The fairies are made of shimmering stardust, as are we all.

The Stars card represents light in the darkness, which can be felt as hope in a desperate time or as faith when the heart is peaceful and open, as the fairy shown here. The stars remind us that we each have a destiny and a higher purpose. Every soul is connected to the universal soul, a part of the things that are timeless and eternal. Each of us is but one tiny spark in the multitude, and each is cherished.

When you get this card in a reading:

Your place in the great order of things is as vital as an entire galaxy awash with stars. In all the universe, there is nothing exactly like you, and that makes you precious and known by name in the cosmos. Have faith in the eternal mysteries. Keep the sparkling light of hope alive in your heart.

In a nutshell: hope, faith, destiny, cosmic connection, eternal mysteries



XVIII • The Moon

Speak not, whisper not, here bloweth thyme and bergamot;
Softly on the evening hour, secret herbs their spices shower...
Latticed from the moonlight's beams,
Perchance a distant dreamer dreams...



WALTER DE LA MARE

Upon a fragrant bed of wild thyme, a fairy lady dreams under the full moon. Like the moonflowers that twine through her bower, she is open to the moonlight's magic, letting its mysteries enter her consciousness. Luna moths dance above her, fanning her with their luminous wings on this warm midsummer's night. The sleeping fairy follows the moonlit path into dreamland, an enchanted realm of her own making that each of us also creates anew each night.

There is a vulnerability that comes from abandoning oneself to the world of dreams. Our consciousness takes flight with fairy wings, exploring the realms of imagination and illusion. The night holds secrets that dissolve like meadow mist with the sunrise. The Moon card represents the lunar consciousness that does not rely on logic or analysis. Dreams as ephemeral as moths in the moonlight take the mind into uncharted realms, pushing the boundaries of understanding. Some things cannot be explained by rational means but must be comprehended in a more primal place in the spirit.

When you get this card in a reading:

Allow time for all to be revealed as your eyes adjust to night vision and as the moon waxes to full light. Some things are not obvious but must be discerned with the inner eye as well as the outer. Trust your intuition, listen to your dreams, and open to the mysteries of the dark.

In a nutshell: secrecy, mystery, the dream world, intuition



XIX • The Sun

Blest power of sunshine!—and genial day,
What balm, what life is in thy ray!



THOMAS MOORE

Pure delight fills the hearts of these jovial fairies as they dance together around a ribbon-bedecked sunflower. In the Victorian language of flowers, the sunflower means “adoration,” and the fairy community is pouring forth their adoration for the source of all life and growth, the sun. Their dance celebrates the radiant blessings and infinite goodness that are their birthright. Young and old alike bask in the warmth of happiness. There is no special reason for the fairies to gather and cavort in beribboned bliss—dancing is their natural state, the expression of their being. The sunflower turns throughout the day, seeking the light and heat that nourish its growth. So, too, the spirit always seeks the divine light that nourishes the growth of joy.

When you get this card in a reading:

All is well in your world. Find the source of joy for you and attune yourself toward it, following it with heart and mind every day. The Sun card is considered the most positive card in the deck. You may not fully realize exactly how fortunate you are. Give thanks for all your blessings.

In a nutshell: happiness, well-being, growth, the warm glow of life



XX • Awakening

Thou'lt wake when morning breaketh,
Pure and calm;
As one who mourns awaketh
When the balm
Of peace hath on him fell.



N. P. WILLIS

The first fragile light of sunrise breaks over a misty meadow. At the edge of a quiet brook a young fairy has paused, caught by his reflection in the still water. He has been wandering all night, fretful and lost in confusion, uncertain of his place in the world, his misdeeds haunting him. With the coming of the dawn, he feels his mind clearing, the spider webs of delusion blowing away in the fresh morning breeze. Watching his own face in the sparkling water, it is as if he truly sees himself for the first time. Close beside him grows the humble wild daisy, the “day’s eye,” whose message is “I will think of it.” All at once, the fairy has the courage to think of his own faults and failings. It is an epiphany, a moment of enlightenment, as the fairy faces himself with eyes wide open. He is who he is, and he must embrace that if he is to be at peace.

This is the awakening of the soul, in which a seeker comes to a place of full awareness of the higher self. Such moments may come after years of spiritual study, or they can come in a sudden moment of awareness, when something as simple as a sunrise may move one to tears. When the soul is awakened, all delusion dissolves. It is a time of maturing, forgiving oneself for youthful follies, and embracing a more meaningful path.

When you get this card in a reading:

It is time to take a thoughtful look at yourself—your intentions, your actions, the impact you make in the world. Judge yourself with compassion, remembering that you are meant to learn lessons and fail at some attempts. But look clearly at what you would like to change and to strive for. Do not shrink from those lessons or make excuses for aspects of yourself that fall short of your ideal. When you look at yourself with eyes fully open, your soul awakens to its full potential.

In a nutshell: enlightenment, epiphany, a shift in personal consciousness toward greater things



XXI • The Worlds

Where the bluebells and the wind are,
Fairies in a ring I spied,
And I heard a little linnet
Singing near beside.
Where the primrose and the dew are,
Soon were sped the fairies all,
Only now the green turf freshens,
And the linnets call.



The hour is twilight, and we are again in the bluebell wood first visited in the Fool card. In this liminal place where the fairy world and the human world touch, the fairies have gathered for a revel. In the distance, the lights of the mortal city can be seen. How many in that great city are aware that the fairies are so close? How many have seen fairy footprints in the butter on a chilly autumn morning or heard the silvery peal of fairy laughter while bathing in a woodland pool? How would their lives be changed if they believed in a world of wonder?

The Worlds is the final card in the Major Arcana, and it signifies the completion of a cycle and coming to a place of wholeness. It brings you back to where you first met the fairies, who are so familiar to you now. You can look at your experiences in the courts of Fairy and see a pattern of meaning and lessons learned. Now, it seems, a choice is presented: to stay with the fairies or return to your mortal life. But a third choice exists as well. Both worlds contain magic and beauty, and a wise person can travel between the two—exploring the realms of imagination while fulfilling worldly duties. The key is to live fully in the moment, with eyes open to see enchantment. You can always pass from one world to the other as long as your heart is innocent and open and wild.

When you get this card in a reading:

Something significant has been completed in your life. Take time to understand the lessons you have learned along the way and recognize how far you have traveled. Contemplate and release the past, and embrace the future with a heart full of joy.

In a nutshell: completion, wholeness, seeing the pattern of life, connection to the world



The Spring Court

*Gorse has lit his lanterns all,
Cobwebbed thrift's a fairy ball,
Earth it smells as good as new,
Winds are merry, sky is blue,
Spring has laughter, Spring has tears,
Life has courage, life has fears...*



JOHN GALSWORTHY



Herald of Spring



This herald announces the coming of the Spring Court. As he approaches, a portal opens between one season and the next—bitter winter retreats, and spring is triumphant. Where his feet tread, the seedlings are awakened beneath the warming earth, and the first tender blossoms emerge. Like all heralds, he is a messenger proclaiming the return of his court and all that the new season offers. His message: “Spring is here at last! Life

begins anew! We have survived the winter. Rejoice! The sap is rising! Every day brings a new surprise.”

When you get this card in a reading:

This card can be used to represent a young man or woman or one who is young at heart. Key characteristics include child-like enthusiasm, fervor, and curiosity. There can be a playful naughtiness with this herald, a friskiness like new spring lambs frolicking in the fields. If this card does not represent a particular person, it can mean the coming of good news or a shift from a time of darkness to a time of light.

In a nutshell: playfulness, enthusiasm, curiosity, a welcome message



Knight of Spring



No one embodies the spring fever that comes over the fairies more than the Knight of Spring. He is an energetic explorer who must have a mission or quest and who becomes restless if kept closely at court. The everyday and the routine have no appeal for him. Dashing, brave, and a bit of a rogue, he sees the humor in most situations, even the most daunting. It's all a great adventure for this enthusiastic and daring fairy knight, and he is more than ready for the challenge. His flower is *Pyrus japonica*, also known as

fairy fire, whose message is “temptation”—in this case, the temptation is to see what is over the next hill, and the next, and the next...

When you get this card in a reading:

This card can be used to represent someone who is fired up and ready for action. To avoid burnout or boredom, this person must always have a quest in sight, some purpose that drives him forward. If the card doesn't indicate a particular person, it can mean an opportunity for creative exploration—perhaps seeing things from a different vantage point, which brings new possibilities for advancement. Travel may be indicated, especially travel without a great deal of planning ahead of time.

In a nutshell: boldness, energetic action, breaking through stale routine



Queen of Spring



Radiant with *joie de vivre*, the Queen of Spring dances before her throne like a blossom on the breeze. Warm, vivacious, and confident, she activates others to change and grow through her captivating example. She is the muse who inspires her court to create works of art, compose music, and write poetry in her honor. Her enthusiasm for each creation is unreserved, heaping accolades upon all and feeding the flames of brilliance and illumination. The people look to her to lead the revels, and her

gaiety enlivens all the gatherings of the Spring Court. Her flower is the primrose, the *prima rosa*, whose meaning in the language of flowers is “youth.” Every spring—indeed, every day—brings delights for this fairy queen who is ever young.

When you get this card in a reading:

This card can be used to represent a woman whose creative spark burns brightly and whose warm personality irresistibly draws others to her. She may be an artist—or life itself may be her art. She is ardent, awake to life’s infinite possibilities, and eager to support others in expressing their potential. In a less positive vein, she can be a bit flighty or frivolous if denied meaningful outlets for self-expression. If the card doesn’t represent a particular person, it can mean a time of great creative joy, when the vital energies of life burst forth and are expressed in ways that benefit others.

In a nutshell: nurturing creative growth and talent,
reveling in the joy of life



King of Spring



The renewing power of the green earth is personified by the charismatic King of Spring. He rules over the Spring Court with great good humor and mirth, rejoicing in the creative activity rising all around him. Vital and virile, this king radiates confidence. His courage is legendary, as are his athletic skills, especially with the bow and arrow. The fairies look to this king as the embodiment of lusty male energy, who inspires by his wholehearted embrace of life's adventure. To be in his fiery and

dynamic presence enlivens his fairy folk to strive beyond previous limitations and aspire to greater growth and achievement. His flower is yellow celandine, whose meaning is "joys to come." It is one of the first flowers of springtime in England, arriving with the return of the swallows.

When you get this card in a reading:

This card can be used to represent a man in the prime of life whose power is generously shared with others. A natural leader, he motivates by example and charisma rather than by domination or autocratic action. His self-assurance can make him seem a bit arrogant to those who don't know him well. If this card doesn't represent a particular person, it can mean a time of powerful personal growth and the ability to influence others in creative and positive ways. Much can be achieved when you have the confidence of your convictions and step into the leadership role with exuberance.

In a nutshell: confidence, creative growth, empowering others, charismatic leadership



Ace of Spring



Aces represent the distilled essence of a suit in its purest or highest form. In this deck, that means the essential energy of the season and its effect on the fairies in that seasonal court. In the Spring Court, the fairies are creative, restless, curious, competitive. The repressed energy of the cold months now finds expression in a warming rush of spring fever. The overall theme is of growth and awakening. The emblem of the Spring Court is the cherry plum tree. It is the first tree to come into blossom in

England, and the fairies greet its arrival with delight. When the first tender buds appear on the bare branches, it is a sign that life is renewing itself after the long winter.

When you get this card in a reading:

The time is right to aspire to great things. New projects that take root now will bloom beautifully and bring a welcome harvest.

Think creatively; allow your imagination to take flight. If there is something that has lain dormant for too long, now is the time to awaken it. Follow the restless yearnings of your heart and mind, for they lead you toward your true calling.

In a nutshell: new creativity, a burst of energy, good beginnings



Two of Spring



Like their human counterparts in the Victorian era, the fairies are avid naturalists, and all fairies learn to paint and draw from nature as a way to closely observe the world around them. Here we see a fairy lady sketching the first birch tree catkins of spring. She is completely absorbed in her task, her whole attention focused on the details of the soft catkins, which will disperse their pollen upon the spring winds to advance the season's growth. The birch tree's message is "renewal and purification," and the fairies

make a cordial of its sap when it rises in spring's first warmth. The fairy artist feels her own creative inspiration rising in harmony with the season, and she happily anticipates many art-filled days to come, even as she stays focused on this sweet moment and the work before her.

When you get this card in a reading:

A time of renewed energy has come. This is a good time to begin new projects, which may take a while to come to fruition but will benefit from being set in motion now. Blow away the doldrums and any stagnant thinking that may be holding you back. Give your best attention to the moment, and enjoy the process of creation, not just the ultimate goal.

In a nutshell: creative self-expression, renewal, anticipation



Three of Spring



The first warm days of spring draw the fairies outdoors to joyously express their talents and avocations, like this happy musician. Perched in a blossoming pear tree, he strings his fairy harp. The pear tree's message is "affection and comfort," both of which are wholeheartedly felt by the fairy as he is joined by three linnets, who begin an impromptu concert with a trilling burst of melody. The fairies' relationship with the birds is a complicated one, but for the most part they enjoy each other's company and, in

some cases, share a deep and abiding friendship. Music is the bond that links them best, and all winter both fairy and linnet look forward to joining together in song. As Wordsworth wrote in his poem "The Green Linnet":

*In this sequester'd nook how sweet
To sit upon my orchard-seat
And flowers and birds once more to greet
My last year's friends together!*

When you get this card in a reading:

Your creative endeavors will get a boost of energy and inspiration by collaborating with others. Cultural exchanges with those whose traditions are different from yours will be especially beneficial. Look beyond your own immediate circle for valuable connections in the arts, commerce, or invention.

In a nutshell: cultural exchange, partnership, creative collaboration, business dealings



Four of Spring



Dancing comes as naturally as flying to the fairies, and they will break into a spontaneous dance at the drop of a flower-petal hat. But some occasions call for a more formalized celebration. A fairy ball is a grand event, when the whole Fairy Court gathers in their finest apparel and elaborate court dances are performed. Like Victorian humans, the fairies enjoy set dances with specific figures and patterns. The discipline involved in learning the dance doesn't diminish the enjoyment of dancing it; indeed, it adds to it!

There is a sense of satisfaction in learning the steps and performing them well. Here we see two fairy couples dancing a cotillon, the most complicated of all Victorian dances. Such ritualized pleasure still allows for individual expression, as each dancer adds his or her own fairy flair.

When you get this card in a reading:

It's time to celebrate! Whether it's in recognition of a milestone such as a birthday or other rite of passage, an achievement that deserves to be honored, or just having made it through some hard times, create a ritual celebration that expresses the delight you have in living. Giving some structure to your merriment makes it more meaningful and memorable.

In a nutshell: ritual, celebration, life's milestones, festivity, a rite of passage



Five of Spring



Morris dancing is an ancient tradition in England. Some of the forms use sticks that are clashed against each other to mimic swordplay, all in good fun. These fairy Morris dancers playfully whack their sticks together, bells jingling merrily as their bare feet stamp upon the earth. The flowers among which they dance are larkspur, whose message is "lightness and levity."

The Morris dancers compete for accolades of excellence, but there is no danger in their rivalry, and jovial comradeship sets the tone. At the end of the day, these competitors will go off to the tavern as friends and raise a glass of fairy mead to their mutual skill.

When you get this card in a reading:

Your creative or work endeavors can reach a new level of achievement with a little healthy competition. The trick is to keep it light and friendly, not engage in a battle with definite winners and losers. The dance of life is about give and take, sharing the triumphs as well as the defeats. Spur each other to greater skill through playfulness and encouragement.

In a nutshell: friendly competition, striving for excellence, healthy rivalry



Six of Spring



It is the last day of spring, for tomorrow is Beltane, when the fairies crown their May Queen, who reigns for just one day and then offers her crown in homage to the Queen of Summer. Friends have gathered to prepare this season's May Queen and bedeck her with hawthorn blossoms, whose message in the language of flowers is "hope." The fairy ladies all honor the chosen one and do not begrudge her the role, which they themselves have played in other years. Their happiness is shared in full because

there is no jealousy or undercurrent of envy. The fairies, with their long perspective, have the self-confidence that allows others their moment in the sunshine. As Edgar Allan Poe wrote in 1836:

*Fairies guard the Queen of May
Let her reign in Peace and Honor—
Every blessing be upon her;
May her future pathway lie,
All beneath a smiling sky.*

When you get this card in a reading:

It can be challenging to accept praise and recognition, especially if you are used to being modest and self-effacing. When others honor you for your gifts, accept it graciously, and return the favor by showing what you admire in them. True leadership doesn't put others down, it lifts them up. Be proud of your achievements, and set an example for others to be proud as well.

In a nutshell: honoring accomplishments, admiration, accepting a position of leadership



Seven of Spring



The first green sprouts of wheat are poking through the warming spring earth, and the fairy gardener is busy tending his crops. Suddenly out of the windy sky comes a flock of skylarks intent upon taking their share of the tender shoots of grain. The gardener defends his plot with valor—though he may be outnumbered, he's got the territorial advantage, as the birds cannot get to the ground as long as the fairy is present. The skylarks will eventually tire of the game and find a less well-

defended field to do their foraging, and the fairy can add some well-earned satisfaction to his harvest.

When you get this card in a reading:

Sometimes having to struggle for something you want adds sweetness to its attainment. If you are facing challenges to your power or obstacles to your endeavor, use your ingenuity to see how you can turn those trials to your advantage. Defend what is yours with righteous courage.

In a nutshell: opposition to a project or endeavor, adversarial challenges, defensiveness



Eight of Spring



In a clearing in the springtime woods, a group of fairy ladies are engaged in an archery competition. In the Victorian era, archery was considered an elegant sport for ladies, displaying to best advantage their graceful form and symbolizing the accuracy of their aim in matters of the heart. The fairy archers have reached the endpoint in their contest, which moves from target to target following the sun. These last arrows will determine the victor. The

fairies sight their target with deliberation, taking their time, and then the arrows fly swiftly and surely toward their goal.

When you get this card in a reading:

Things are speeding up now, and you may feel a sense of urgency to complete something that has been in progress for a while. You may receive help from a distant source, a helpful communication, or some new information to advance you toward your goal. Things are definitely moving! Don't let hastiness make you miss the mark.

In a nutshell: swiftness, incoming messages, aiming toward a goal



Nine of Spring



Oh, how the Victorians loved the infinite variety of nature! Here we see a fairy naturalist surrounded by all the things that have captured his fancy over the years. Ensconced in his cabinet of curiosities, he is at his most fulfilled and expresses his truest self. He is pursuing his passion for the flora and fauna of his world, cataloging it, observing it, always seeking more. The fairies do not harm living creatures for their own self-interests (at least, the good fairies don't!), so this naturalist's *objets d'attention* are ones

he has found in his wanderings, keeping an eye out for the unusual and the beautiful. He has spent many springs in this happy activity, and in his mature years his fascination is undiminished. He is the expert in his field to whom other fairies come for instruction, and yet he continues his own study. There is always more to be learned when you are following your bliss.

When you get this card in a reading:

This is an excellent time to pursue excellence! Recognize your gifts and use them to the fullest in the interest of something you love. Add to your knowledge and offer it to others who share your passions. The thing that captures your attention and holds it over time is your true calling. You are ready to be a master in your chosen field.

In a nutshell: excellence, devotion to an interest, mastery of a pursuit or passion



Ten of Spring



The creative impulses of spring are all very well, but what happens when you take on too much? Even a fairy can feel overwhelmed. Here we see the fairies of the Spring Court rushing to fulfill all that needs to be accomplished, caught up in the restlessness of spring fever. There are pictures to paint, songs to sing, flowers to tend, studying, dancing, planting, playing! It can seem like even the eons of lifetime a fairy is given will never be enough to accomplish it all. Pushed to the point of exhaustion, the fairies lose the joy

that comes from pursuing their passions. All sense of order and beauty is abandoned in their frantic flying chaos.

When you get this card in a reading:

Our modern world is more chaotic than the busiest times the Victorian fairies experienced, and it is even more important to get a handle on it. Multitasking to the point where all pleasure is lost from even the most enjoyable of pursuits leads to soul exhaustion. You may be overestimating the importance of some activities and be reluctant to set them aside. You may also be overestimating your own importance in schemes and activities. Taking everything upon your own shoulders inevitably leads to burnout. Don't make your blessings into burdens.

In a nutshell: overload, multitasking, exhaustion, creative burnout



The Summer Court

*Sweet, languorous days of perfect calm and peace,
And drowsy somnolence, we love you well:
Fields, woods, and gardens own your lulling spell...
Oh balmy Summer, dear thy soft repose,
As is the fragrance of thy sweetest rose!*



JOHN RUSSELL HAYES



Herald of Summer



This herald announces the coming of the Summer Court. As she passes, a portal opens between one season and the next—spring's promise ripens into the lush beauty of summer. Colors deepen, buds open into full bloom, and perfume drifts on the warm breeze. Like all heralds, she is a messenger proclaiming the return of her court and all that the new season offers. Her message: "The days lengthen, and the nights are filled with magical possibilities."

Beauty is everywhere! Embrace life, open to love, and experience the world with all of your senses.”

When you get this card in a reading:

This card can be used to represent a young person or a person who is young at heart. Key characteristics include gentleness, wonder, and sensitivity. This is someone whose emotions are near the surface and whose tears fall easily, whether in happiness or sorrow, often passing as quickly as a summer storm. If it does not represent a particular person, this card can mean a time of increasing harmony, an offering of beauty, or a message of friendship or love.

In a nutshell: emotional sensitivity, appreciation for beauty, wonder, a longed-for message



Knight of Summer



The Knight of Summer comes flying with his turtledove companion, holding a rose aloft like a triumphant banner. He is the fairy equivalent of the idealistic knight in shining armor, with glittering wings instead of cold steel. Romantic and optimistic, this knight is dispatched by the court to do battle on behalf of *amor*, for he is the champion of love's righteous causes. In peacetime he is the ultimate lover, his heart overflowing with the boundless belief that love conquers all. His emblem is the wild

rose, whose message in the language of flowers is “ambassador of love.” The Summer Court is well represented by this ambassador, who brings pleasure as his gift.

When you get this card in a reading:

This card can be used to represent someone who follows his heart’s guidance, always seeking the true path of bliss. Key characteristics are romanticism, ardor, honor, and altruism, which may stray into flights of quixotic fancy if not grounded in reality. This person may be a spiritual seeker on a quest to attain connection with the Beloved, whatever that may be. If this card doesn’t represent a particular person, it can mean a happy development in a love relationship, a sense of spiritual purpose, or an opportunity to help others find more happiness in life.

In a nutshell: optimism, bliss, the coming of peace, the triumph of love



Queen of Summer



The lovely Queen of Summer seems born from a mid-summer night's dream. As beautiful within as without, she rules over her court with tenderness, compassionately understanding what is in the heart of each fairy under her care. Her people look to her for guidance in affairs of love, insights into dreams, and advice in all matters of art and beauty. Her flower is the fragrant sweet violet, whose message is "modesty," for this queen never insists upon the honor that is due her position. Her concern is always for the

happiness of others, and her gentle, romantic grace inspires tribute and devotion that flow freely back to her.

When you get this card in a reading:

This card can be used to represent a woman who devotes herself to the happiness of those she loves, especially her mate and close family. Her key characteristics are tenderness, emotional sensitivity, and feminine intuition. She may have a tendency to give too much or to be overwhelmed by the emotions and needs of others, but her beautiful nature will always draw love to her that can sustain and strengthen. If this card does not represent a particular person, it can mean insight that comes through imagination and intuition rather than logic or analysis. Listen to your heart and trust its guidance.

In a nutshell: intuition, emotional sensitivity, feminine grace, a time of tenderness



King of Summer



With his court at peace and summer's beauty upon his land, the King of Summer contemplates the blessings of the fairy life and finds them in abundance. Though as sensitive as his lovely consort, the king does not allow his emotions to rule him but turns them always toward harmony. Friendship and camaraderie are what he wants for his people, and he seeks peaceful solutions to any conflicts. The fairies look to their king to lead the courtly dances of love that enliven the enchanting summer nights. His

flower is the velvety pansy, from the French *pensée*, for “thought.” Serene and happy in his thoughts, the king drinks deeply from the cup of joy.

When you get this card in a reading:

This card can be used to represent a man in the prime of life who is a kind friend, a sympathetic listener, and a devoted mate. He is contemplative rather than active, and he enjoys peace and serenity. Key characteristics are compassion, emotional stability, and faithfulness in love. Under some circumstances he can become too emotionally detached, preferring to philosophize about matters of the heart rather than engaging with them. If this card doesn't represent a particular person, it can mean a time devoted to easing emotional turmoil and finding peace. A spiritual counselor may be able to provide perspective from a less-fraught point of view.

In a nutshell: tranquil strength, calming emotions while keeping an open heart



Ace of Summer



Aces represent the distilled essence of a suit in its purest or highest form. In this deck, that means the essential energy of the season and its effect on the fairies in that seasonal court. In the Summer Court, the fairies are romantic, playful, languid. Spring's restless rushing gives way to a slower rhythm of long, warm days and luminous, lingering twilights. The overall theme is the play of emotions, pleasure, and sensuality. The emblem of the Summer Court is the water lily, whose meaning in the language of flowers

is “purity of heart.” The lily floats on top of the water, offering its beauty and fragrance freely, receiving sunlight and moonlight in the embrace of its cupped petals.

When you get this card in a reading:

You are being offered the gift of pleasure, a time when you can slow down and smell the flowers. Pay grateful attention to all the beauty in your world. Open your heart to the possibility of new or renewed love. This ace is a strong yes to any question you have about your own happiness. Life fulfills its most beautiful and fruitful potential in summer’s warm embrace.

In a nutshell: pleasure, beauty, a gift of love, delights of all kinds



Two of Summer



The balmy summer weather warms the heart and quickens passion among the fairies. Here we see two fairies who have been courting. A boating excursion has taken them to a secluded spot where the world consists of just the two of them—nothing exists in this moment but the gaze of the beloved. Time drifts by unheeded, and the sweethearts are floating in a idyll of infatuation and breathless love. Wild strawberries add their own

sweetness; in the Victorian plant language, their message is “you intoxicate me with delight.”

When you get this card in a reading:

A new love has captured your heart or perhaps an old love is experiencing a rekindling of romance. The first flush of infatuation is fleeting, but it is delicious while it lasts. Give and receive love with an open and trusting heart.

In a nutshell: romance, sensual bliss, new love, infatuation



Three of Summer



Three fairy ladies have gone for a swim and are joined by three bird friends who also enjoy the cool water on a hot summer afternoon. The fairies' pleasure is increased by sharing it with companions, and playfulness adds to the lighthearted expression of friendship. The things they have in common unite them—birds of a feather flock together!—and their differences keep things lively. Friendship is an adventure, with many opportunities for happy surprises.

When you get this card in a reading:

Making time for friendship is as important as any other aspect of life. If you've been neglecting your connections to friends, now is the time to make it a priority. You will find great satisfaction in gathering with those who know you well and with whom you can be yourself. There doesn't need to be a special occasion for a gathering of friends—the time you spend in good company is a celebration in itself.

In a nutshell: friendship, happiness, playfulness, the delights of companionship



Four of Summer



It is summer in England and the land is lushly beautiful, with delights at every hand. The long summer days offer infinite pleasures for the fairies, who are deeply connected to nature. But this young fairy man can't find the joy. Bored, cynical, filled with ennui, he lies languidly on the warm, mossy stones and can't be bothered to change his sullen mood. Dragonflies zoom by him, intent upon their own purpose and sparkling in the sunlight, but

the fairy is not moved. Everything is dull for him in his present state of mind.

When you get this card in a reading:

Has life lost its sparkle? Even among the fairies, sometimes the doldrums hit and nothing has much appeal. Dissatisfaction with daily routine can indicate a need to break free of its patterns and seek new ways to approach life with interest. It is often a matter of simply opening your eyes to the wonders around you, like the iridescent dragonflies that dance and dart over the fairy's peaceful pool. Simple joys are ours for the taking, with just a shift of perception. As the Victorian poet and novelist Robert Louis Stevenson wrote:

*The world is so full of a number of things,
I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings.*

In a nutshell: ennui, boredom, dissatisfaction, cynicism



Five of Summer



All through the long summer day, a fairy lady has toiled over her beautiful sandcastle, losing herself in the process. The heat of the sun on her wings, the susurrous sound of the surf, the happy hunt for gleaming shells on the wet sand—all have lulled her into a timeless state of happy creativity. Alas, she didn't anticipate the turning of the tide, and she now stands helpless on the shore, watching the relentless ripples creeping closer and closer, eating away at her castle's foundations. She knows that sandcastles

don't last forever, but still the disappointment is hard to bear. Her seaside holiday seems ruined, and the seagull's sardonic comments are not helping matters.

When you get this card in a reading:

Something has disappointed you or not turned out the way you hoped. A sense of loss and of time wasted in fruitless effort may be overwhelming you. It may be helpful to look for what is still left rather than focusing on what didn't succeed. The fairy had a great day before the tide came in, and a day of happiness in the sunshine can't be taken away, no matter what happens afterward.

In a nutshell: disappointment, wasted effort, crying over spilt milk



Six of Summer



Summer is a time of enchantment for children, and so it is with the fairies' little ones. A group of fairy children are enjoying an outing at the brook with their nanny. Under her protective gaze they cavort with carefree gaiety. As she watches her dear charges, Nanny remembers what it felt like to dive into innocent enjoyment. She recalls her own childhood days, when she, too, played tag with butterflies and rode (side-saddle, of course) on an obliging frog. The fairy children can't imagine that Nanny ever

frolicked and splashed on a hot afternoon, but she just smiles and enjoys the memory of those sweet youthful hours. Living it all again through the delight of the children, her heart is full and content.

When you get this card in a reading:

Allow yourself to indulge in some innocent enjoyment. Remember what gave you most pleasure as a child, and seek that kind of delight again. Rereading favorite childhood books can carry you back to places of wonder and imagination. Let go of any adult cynicism or the need to always be controlled and contained in your pastimes. You are never too old to play.

In a nutshell: innocence, nostalgia, memory, the delights of childhood



Seven of Summer



Fashion is a great concern among the Victorian fairies. Styles change from season to season, and it's important to stay *au courant* with the latest modes. Here we see a fairy milliner with one of her best customers. The new summer creations have just arrived, and each must be tried and considered carefully. But they are all so beautiful! How to choose? The fairy lady tries on hat after hat after hat while the milliner patiently tells her how lovely she looks in each.

When you get this card in a reading:

When you are presented with too many choices and none seems obvious, you have two ways to go. You can choose at random and hope for the best, or you can wait until your confusion clears and one option calls to you more compellingly. Continuing to fret back and forth between one possibility and another is just wasted effort. Either choose now or decide to choose later and wait for further clarity.

In a nutshell: choices, confusion, an overabundance of possibilities



Eight of Summer



A once lively and refreshing brook has gone dry at the source, leaving only the barren streambed buzzing with mosquitoes. The banks are arid in the summer heat, the atmosphere dispiriting. A fairy man who once made this brook his home is surrendering at last to the impossibility of staying. It is time to accept nature's reality and find a more verdant place to dwell. The willow and rue under which he passes speak of mourning and regret. Many hopes

are being abandoned as the fairy trudges away, unable to summon spirits light enough to allow him to fly.

When you get this card in a reading:

Like the Six of Winter, this card speaks of taking leave of something, of turning your back and choosing a new path. But unlike the Six of Winter, the atmosphere here is not of hope within sorrow but rather of depression and disenchantment. It can be hard to begin anew when your spirits are low, and you may be focused now on what has not succeeded rather than on what could be in your future. This card advises you to walk away with no backward glances. Trust that even if you can't perceive it now, you are heading toward better times.

In a nutshell: depression, abandoning a situation or undertaking, cutting your losses



Nine of Summer



Oh, beautiful summer night! The fragrance of the bedewed garden mingles with fairy music as the evening comes alive with enchantment. A fairy lady plays with a flutter of fireflies, rapturously joining in their ethereal dance. If she catches one, she gets her wish! The flowers that surround her add their own wishful magic: spearmint for virtue, moonflowers for dreams, fairy flax for spinning those dreams into reality. But the most important element is the light heart of the fairy herself, for it is

that spirit of joyful optimism that carries her wish forward, a shimmering light dancing through the gloaming.

When you get this card in a reading:

This card is traditionally known as the wishing card, and when it appears in a reading you can look at it two ways. Either your existing wish will come true, whatever it is, or it is time to make a new wish, as the universe is conspiring in your favor. Knowing what you want is the first step to manifesting your dreams. Then reach out with both hands and capture your heart's desire.

In a nutshell: optimism, a wish fulfilled, luck in love and emotional matters



Ten of Summer



On the first really hot day of the year, the fairies of the Summer Court gather at a favorite spot to enjoy each other's company. Lovers old and young, children and parents, friends and neighbors chase the frothy bubbles and immerse themselves in the waters of affection. The flowers that grow around this pool are lilies of the valley, whose message is "a return to happiness." All cares and worries are set aside, and the prospect of all the happy summer days to come lies before the euphoric fairies.

When you get this card in a reading:

Many kinds of love add to the fulfillment of life: two people united in partnership or marriage, true friendship that shares both laughter and tears, the devotion between parent and child, and common dreams that unite a community as an extended family. Find all the ways in which you can bring love and pleasure into your life now. Happiness is flowing toward you from an endless wellspring.

In a nutshell: joy, heartfelt love of all kinds, a time of fulfillment



The Autumn Court

*'Tis golden Autumn, and a mellow haze
Envelops all the dreamy countryside;
Soon o'er the world will sweep a crimson tide
Of fairy fire and set the world ablaze...*



JOHN RUSSELL HAYES



Herald of Autumn



This herald announces the coming of the Autumn Court. She opens the portal between one season and the next—the splendor of summer making way for the abundance of autumn. This herald gets things moving again in a purposeful way. She welcomes the first falling leaves and the first chill wind that sets the leaves dancing. She listens to the earth and respects its power. Like all heralds, she is a messenger proclaiming the return of her court and all that the new season offers. Her message: “It is time to

gather the harvest. The weather grows colder and the days are precious now, for soon the winter will close in. Be grateful.”

When you get this card in a reading:

This card can be used to represent a young person or a person who is young at heart. Key characteristics are practicality, watchfulness, and wisdom beyond one's years. This is the dedicated student, the one who finds answers that may elude others simply by taking the time to observe and think things through. If this card does not represent a particular person, it can mean a time of study, good advice from an unexpected source, or a sign that it is time to pay more attention to material security and prosperity.

In a nutshell: practicality, connection to earthly things, gratefulness for the present moment



Knight of Autumn



The Autumn Court places its trust in the Knight of Autumn, who stands atop his companion tortoise and surveys the wheat harvest, overseeing its progress. The fairies look to this stalwart knight for practical help and advice when hard work needs to be done. His steady encouragement and dependable nature make him the perfect representative of his king and queen, who know he will get the job done with no drama or unpleasant surprises. He never rushes through a task but attends to every detail and trusts

that all things happen in their perfect time. At the end of the day, this knight rests with the peaceful heart of one who has done his best.

When you get this card in a reading:

This card can be used to represent someone who is a strong and steady worker, the archetypal right-hand man (or woman). He is deliberate and thorough in his actions, and can seem a bit plodding to those who want to rush through and get to the finish line. But his sense of responsibility will not allow slipshod work; calmly and kindly, he goes about his business and gets the job done. If this card doesn't represent a particular person, it can mean a need to slow down and give attention to details. It can also offer reassurance that even though a desired outcome hasn't arrived yet, it is on the way.

In a nutshell: calm deliberation, dedication to a task, overseeing a project



Queen of Autumn



Autumn is the season of ripe abundance, and at its center is a queen whose nature overflows with generosity. None in her court will ever know hunger, for the Queen of Autumn thrives on fulfilling each and every need, and makes sure there is always enough for all. Wise as well as loving, she knows she can't do everything alone, so she delegates responsibility to those whom she most trusts (such as the Knight of Autumn). This queen has a merry heart, for all her earthy practicality, and she warmly

welcomes the fairy folk to her feast table, feeding both body and spirit with motherly love. Her emblem is the autumn rowan tree, whose message is “protection.”

When you get this card in a reading:

This card can be used to represent a woman who is motherly in nature, with a generous heart grounded in practicality. This is a loving earth mother who wants to feed and care for the world, starting with her loved ones and encompassing all who know her. Her key characteristics are earthy sensuality, humor, patience, and protectiveness. Less positively, she can be a bit smothering, insisting that she knows what is best. (She probably does.) If the card does not represent a particular person, it can indicate the need for mothering energy, an offering of comfort and care, or a gathering of friends and family.

In a nutshell: protective nurturing, common sense, generosity, abundance of all kinds



King of Autumn



When autumnal winds beat against the woodland trees and the nights grow ever longer, the fairies look to the King of Autumn for protection and reassurance. The most fatherly of the fairy kings (as his consort is the most motherly), he provides tangible help wherever it is needed and banishes fear with the jovial comfort of his benevolence. No dreamy wishfulness or ambitious conquest for this king—his whole being is focused on keeping his people safe and secure, now and in the challenging months ahead. His

emblem is the autumn beech tree, whose message is “prosperity.” In times of plenty and times of want, the King of Autumn knows just what to do.

When you get this card in a reading:

This card can be used to represent a man of mature years, solidly grounded in practicality and material well-being. He is the protective father-figure, the helpful man who will do his best to solve all your problems, the one to turn to when you are in need of money or physical assistance. A traditionalist, he values home, history, and family. His possessions and property are part of what makes him who he is, and he must guard against becoming too materialistic. If this card doesn't represent a particular person, it can signify that material help is at hand—as well as practical advice that should be heeded.

In a nutshell: practical help, fatherly protection, prosperity, home and family



Ace of Autumn



Aces represent the distilled essence of a suit in its purest or highest form. In this deck, that means the essential energy of the season and its effect on the fairies in that seasonal court. In the Autumn Court, the fairies are busy with work, harvest, and nesting at home. They shake off the languor of summer with the first autumnal chill and turn their minds to more practical concerns. The overall theme is connection to the earth, abundance, and industriousness. The emblem of the Autumn Court is the apple.

When sliced through the center, the heart of the apple reveals a five-pointed star, symbolizing the four elements of air, fire, water, earth, and the spirit of Fairy that honors them all.

When you get this card in a reading:

This is a time when things that have only existed in your imagination and your hopes can find manifestation. Bringing it all home is possible now if you are willing to put in the work. Gather your harvest of completion, and prepare for a time of thanksgiving and abundance. This ace can also mean a physical or monetary gift earned by your own worthiness.

In a nutshell: physical well-being, abundance, prosperity, a longed-for gift



Two of Autumn



Autumn is a busy time for the fairies, and sometimes they just don't slow down enough to think things through. This fairy is bringing home some hazelnuts, and he was overly optimistic about his ability to balance an armful of nuts while riding on his penny-farthing bicycle. He may be able to recover his equilibrium, but the more intelligent path might have been to carry a basket or walk rather than ride. The fairy still has his sense of humor,

though, and the hazelnuts of wisdom will ensure that this is a lesson well learned.

When you get this card in a reading:

When you are balancing more than one task at a time, both of them could end up falling short of excellence. If you are being pulled in two different directions, it may be best to prioritize and give your attention to just one until it is completed to your satisfaction. Don't try to take on too much at once just to prove that you can.

In a nutshell: ineffectual shortcuts, juggling too many tasks



Three of Autumn



A group of fairies is working together at a cider press in the golden autumn afternoon. Each fairy has a task: cutting the apples, working the press, bottling the cider, and storing it for the cold months to come. Other fairies have harvested the wild windfall apples and brought them to the cider makers, and the entire Autumn Court will benefit from the fruits of their labors. These fairies are quietly happy with their work and the comradeship that makes the hours more pleasant. They feel a

deep satisfaction in knowing they are contributing to the well-being of the community as a whole.

When you get this card in a reading:

Even the smallest task can contribute to a greater purpose, especially if it is done with a happy and willing heart. Offer your skills to projects that can use them, and don't be shy about asking others to collaborate on your own projects as well. Many hands make light work, as the saying goes, and they also make the experience more fulfilling in the process.

In a nutshell: cooperation, working together for a common goal



Four of Autumn



In a grove of chestnut trees, a fairy sits upon a cache of nuts, engaged in argument with a squirrel who is decidedly unhappy. There is some question of territory being discussed. And yet anyone can see that the forest floor contains far more fallen chestnuts than any squirrel or fairy could reasonably use. There is enough for all, and plenty of other abundance of all kinds. Their quarrel is born of greed and selfishness rather than authentic

need. The squirrel is furious, the fairy is defensive, and neither of them is going to enjoy a tasty chestnut anytime soon.

When you get this card in a reading:

When you are in a state of mind that sees only scarcity, it is unlikely that your prosperity will increase in any significant way. Arms that are clutched tight around what you already have are not open to receive the abundance the universe wants to give you. This is not to say that money isn't a concern, but parsimoniousness is not the answer. Think outside your limiting worldview for new ways to bring in wealth and well-being.

In a nutshell: poverty consciousness, selfishness, fear of loss, money worries



Five of Autumn



As with its human counterpart, Victorian fairy society has strata of classes and degrees of wealth. From the nobility to the gentry to the destitute, all are found in each of the Fairy Courts. Even in autumn, when abundance is overflowing, there are still those who are on the outskirts and suffer from lack. Here, two orphans have come upon a group of friends gathered around a dinner table. The enticing smells and sounds of laughter and music wring their hearts, but though the younger fairy wants to join the group, his

sister's pride holds her back. The orphans have been struggling for so long, it is hard to believe that anyone would reach out to them in generosity.

When you get this card in a reading:

Help is at hand, but you may need to set aside your pride in order to ask for it. Feeling beaten down and destitute makes it even harder to recognize comfort when it is offered or to imagine that things can ever change. Don't lock yourself into a victim role that prevents you from accepting aid.

In a nutshell: poverty, need, feeling excluded from comfort



Six of Autumn



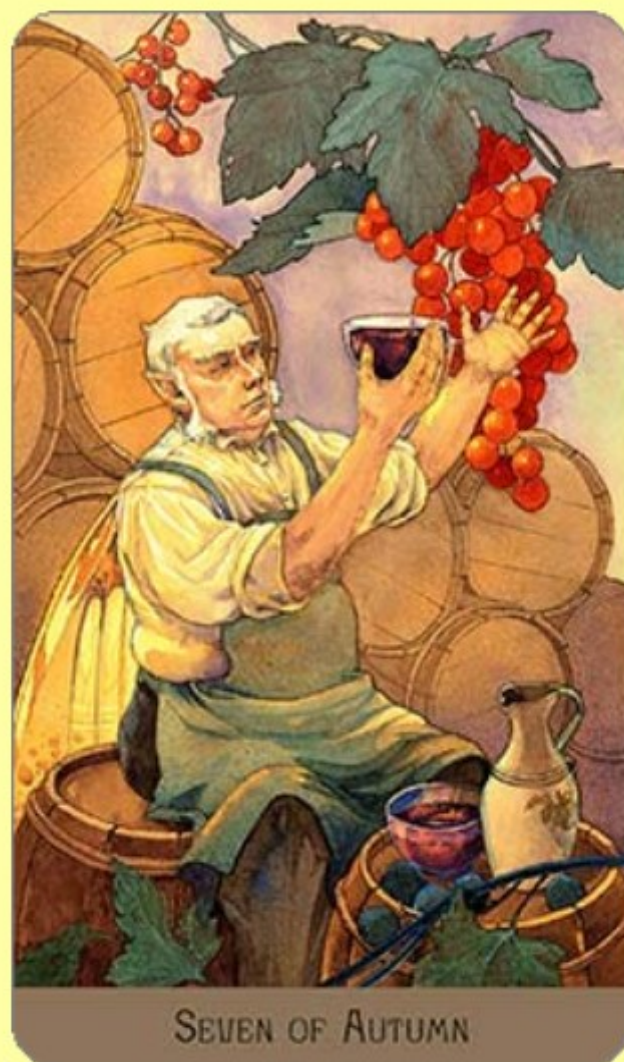
When the fairies are ill or injured, they turn to herbs and flowers for healing. This fairy lady is suffering from a torn wing. She has come to a wise healer who applies a soothing poultice of comfrey leaves. The virtue is in the plant itself but also in the tender touch the older fairy gives. The injured lady could have purchased the herbs from an apothecary and treated her ailment herself, but by opening to receive help from another, she is caring for her spirit as well as her body. Her pain is lessened by the calm comfort of the

healer's skill. It is a blessing that flows both ways—the healer makes good use of her art and the fairy lady is made whole again. Healing offered with compassion and care can work wonders.

When you get this card in a reading:

It is easy to fall into a habit of self-reliance that excludes the possibility of accepting care from others. As with the Five of Autumn, this card speaks of need. But where the Five shows reluctance to seek assistance, the Six shows help graciously offered and gratefully accepted. If you are in need of healing, whether of body or soul, allow another to offer solace. Pass on the gift when the opportunity presents itself—which it always will.

In a nutshell: healing, care, *caritas*, sharing your skills with others



Seven of Autumn



Fairy wines and brews are the stuff of legend, and each seasonal court has its own specialties: icy distillations of berries in winter, delicate primrose cordial in spring, the potent honey mead of summer, and the rich currant wine of autumn. This fairy winemaker has opened one of the casks from last year to see if his creation is ready for drinking in the months to come. He is not in a hurry—he savors every aspect of his craft, from the way light passes through the ruby liquid to its fruity bouquet and taste that

captures the bittersweet nature of the season. Perhaps the winemaker will approve this vintage, or perhaps it needs more time in the barrel. For the fairies, there is always more time and no need to rush what can be made perfect with patience.

When you get this card in a reading:

Don't be impatient or rush something to completion that should take more time. Let it ripen in its own season. Your job now is to maintain its development, using your expertise to keep a watchful eye on its progress, and to trust that success is assured with patience and diligence. Keep focused on the task at hand, not the distant goal.

In a nutshell: patience, timeliness, waiting for the rewards of industrious work



Eight of Autumn



Music is one of the fairies' greatest gifts, and the sound of fairy music has stolen the heart of many an unwary mortal. Musicality comes naturally to all fairies, but there is a practical side as well. Harps and lutes, flutes and fiddles are painstakingly crafted by fairies who have trained for many years, first as an apprentice, then as a journeyman, and finally—perhaps—as a master who teaches others the exacting art. Each stage of learning takes time and can't be rushed—and the master knows that apprentices who

want to rush are not cut out for this kind of dedicated craft. For those who hear a true calling, it is a pleasure to delve into the tradition that stands behind the completed object—and with fairies, the tradition is an ancient one indeed.

When you get this card in a reading:

It's a wonderful feeling to take pride in your work. Mastering a skill of any kind takes dedication, though natural talent helps too. Apply yourself with serene patience to the pursuits you are passionate about. Don't be daunted by the prospect of months or even years of endeavor to accomplish a degree of excellence. It is time well spent and rewarding in itself.

In a nutshell: mastering a craft, meticulous work,
practice makes perfect



Nine of Autumn



Fairies are sociable as a rule, but some prefer a quiet, solitary life. This fairy spinster has made a cozy nest for herself and her house sparrow companion. Their home is in a wild plum tree, whose message in the language of flowers is "independence." It is a fruitful life in every sense of the word! The ability to care for herself, answer to no one else, and be alone with her thoughts is rewarding. This fairy has found deep contentment in her life

because she has a strong sense of self-reliance and knows how to count her blessings.

When you get this card in a reading:

Some of your most contented moments are when you are alone in your own nest. There are sacrifices in choosing to be solitary, and loneliness can be the price paid for freedom. But if this is what your spirit is longing for, don't deny yourself time apart, even from those you love. It takes a strong character to find a healthy balance between solitude and society.

In a nutshell: independence, happiness in solitude, taking care of yourself



Ten of Autumn



The harvest is in, the fairy vats of wine and mead are safely stored away, and it is time to gather with loved ones for a feast. In truth, the fairies don't need much excuse for a feast—their lives are full of celebrations—but there is something special about this time of year, an extra spoonful of thankfulness to sweeten the pudding. Several generations of fairies have come together in love and convivial companionship, and the spirits of past generations are present in memory. From the oldest to the youngest (slumbering

sweetly on the hearth rug with her pet mole), all are content and grateful.

When you get this card in a reading:

There is a time for solitude and a time for reaching out to others for cozy company. If you have been spending too much time on your own, make a point of gathering with friends and extended family, even if it is just for a simple meal. If such gatherings are everyday for you, it is time to pay more attention to the great blessing that comes from having people in your life who care for you and consider you part of their intimate circle. Come together and give thanks.

In a nutshell: gratefulness, abundance, security, the blessings of family and friends



The Winter Court

*Oh! where do fairies hide their heads,
When snow lies on the hills?
When frost has spoiled their mossy beds,
And crystallized their rills?
Beneath the moon they cannot trip
In circles o'er the plain:
And draughts of dew they cannot sip,
Till green leaves come again.*



THOMAS HAYNES BAYLY



Herald of Winter



This herald announces the arrival of the Winter Court. As he approaches, a portal opens between one season and the next—golden autumn surrenders to winter's icy embrace. The Herald of Winter marks the transition from a time of plenty and thankfulness to a time of scarcity and survival. Whatever was left undone, it's too late now: winter has come, and the time for excuses and delay is past. Like all heralds, he is a messenger proclaiming the return of his court and all that the new season

offers. His message: "Take care, be alert, prepare for the cold, prepare for the darkness. Walk carefully over the icy ground, and look around you at the sparkling world. Things are about to get more challenging."

When you get this card in a reading:

This card can be used to represent a young person or a person who is young at heart. Key characteristics are sharpness of wit, truthfulness, and sometimes a lack of tact. This person can be uncompromising and present a challenge to those who practice diplomacy and cooperation. If this card does not represent a particular person, it can mean the approach of a more difficult time and the need to prepare to meet challenges. Forewarned is forearmed.

In a nutshell: uncompromising honesty, directness, quick-wittedness, a warning message



Knight of Winter



The Winter Court, rife with quarrels and battles, has as its chief warrior this fierce knight. Riding furiously over the frozen earth on his wild mink, he wields a crystal sword that pierces to the heart and can bring death to any fairy. His emblem plant is the winter blackthorn, whose bitter fruit is harvested only after the first frosts. The blackthorn's message is "I bring difficulty." Reckless and ruthless, this knight is the hand of vengeance for his king and queen, barely controlled even by them. There is no reasoning with

him, no chance for diplomacy—it's kill or be killed for the Knight of Winter.

When you get this card in a reading:

This card may be used to represent a person who is aggressive, forceful, and impulsive. Inclined to be quarrelsome, this person can be hot-tempered and ruthless in the attainment of his goals. If the card does not represent a particular person, it could be a situation in which you are acting before thinking things through. Swiftiness can be a virtue, but it is foolish to rush in where angels (and intelligent fairies) fear to tread.

In a nutshell: aggression, forcefulness, recklessness, a warlike attitude



Queen of Winter



Sharply intelligent, the Queen of Winter knows the power of silence and the strategy of keeping one's thoughts to oneself. When she chooses to speak, her skill as a communicator is unsurpassed, drawing upon her keen powers of observation and piercing insight. To her subjects and those who do not know her well, her chief characteristic seems to be coldness, but her chilly demeanor conceals a heart that has been wounded and which she must protect from further pain. The fairies look to this queen as a

model of forbearance in times of trouble or war. Her plant is the mistletoe, whose message is "I surmount difficulties." Ruling over the frozen season of stillness, this queen understands well the lessons of loss and grief. She is a formidable ally for those few to whom she gives her trust.

When you get this card in a reading:

This card may be used to represent a mature woman who either does not have children (through choice or by chance) or whose children are grown and gone. It can also represent someone who is grieving the loss of a relationship or the end of a marriage. On a more positive note, use this card to represent a woman who speaks her mind and provides needed clarity, often saying things others fear to say. If the card does not represent a particular person, it can signify a cynicism about personal relationships, the need for clarity and discernment, or a time when uncomfortable truths need to be spoken.

In a nutshell: intelligence, criticism, bitter sadness that influences relationships



King of Winter



Like his consort, the King of Winter keeps his thoughts to himself, listening with fair but shrewd consideration to all who approach his throne with respect. Though he has the potential for cruelty, he keeps it in check, sheathed like his royal sword. His plant is holly, among whose messages in the language of flowers is "foresight." The King of Winter sees the challenges that lie ahead for the fairies in his court and what sacrifices may be needed to survive. He is prepared to take action, including going to war, but

his decisions are not made from a place of passion. Cool, disciplined, and commanding, this king rules from the head, not the heart. Do not make an enemy of him.

When you get this card in a reading:

This card can be used to represent a man of mature years who is in a position of authority and power: the boss, the politician, the military man, the stern father. He can be a wise leader, but he does not share power well. If you are going to argue with him, have your facts in order. If this card does not represent a particular person, it can mean a need for cool and detached strategizing in challenging times. If you must do battle for a cause, assemble your allies and determine calmly how to proceed. Use your wits before you take action.

In a nutshell: logic, discipline, emotional detachment, choosing your battles wisely



Ace of Winter



Aces represent the distilled essence of a suit in its purest or highest form. In this deck, that means the essential energy of the season and its effect on the fairies in that seasonal court. In the Winter Court, the fairies are not in a good mood, for the most part. They are edgier, more vulnerable, more inclined to quarrel and malice. The fairies are connected to nature and spend much of their time outdoors, so this is not a comfortable season for them. The overall theme is harshness, conflict, survival, troubles.

And yet, at its best, winter is a time of clarity. The trees are bare, the landscape is open. Things are brought into focus, and what is most important comes to the fore. The emblem of the Winter Court is the icicle: sharp, potentially dangerous, but also beautiful in its shining clearness.

When you get this card in a reading:

This is a time when cool heads must prevail, and clarity of thought must be brought to bear upon difficult situations. It is possible to see clearly now if you strip away any details that are nonessential to the situation. Set aside ego and the desire to win; let your intelligence set your priorities. This card can also mean a gift of eloquence and improved communication.

In a nutshell: a situation becoming clearer, truth-telling, intelligent thought



Two of Winter



Two fairies have decided to settle their differences like gentlemen. Dueling was discouraged as the Victorian era progressed, but the fairies cling to old customs when it comes to matters of honor. Unfortunately, these fairy gentlemen have let their pride get the better of their intelligence. The ravens may think the duel is an amusing entertainment, but it is likely to end in regret for both fairies, for they are equally matched and equally likely to be harmed. At this point, however, there is no backing down without

disgrace. The only thing they can do is delay the start of their duel on some technicality, which they are both desperately trying to think of.

When you get this card in a reading:

You have gotten into a situation from which there is no obvious positive movement forward. While you are looking for a good solution, it is best to just stay where you are and not make any hasty decisions or sudden moves. Advice and commentary from other people are not helpful now; don't confuse the matter more with additional information.

In a nutshell: stalemate, refusal to compromise, equal blame



Three of Winter



A night at the theatre offers opportunity for drama of all kinds. Some elegant fairy ladies are finding the intrigue in the audience as riveting as the scene onstage. With little to occupy them during the long winter months, gossip is a favorite pastime, and their opinions are not always kind. Small offenses are magnified, little lapses of judgment are thrown into high relief, and everyone minds everyone else's business far better than they mind their

own. There are real tragedies, to be sure, but exaggerated melodrama serves just as well for petty minds and chilly hearts.

When you get this card in a reading:

We all know people who thrive on making trouble, whether in their own lives or in the lives of those around them. Workplace intrigue is particularly insidious, as it can cause real damage to livelihood and reputation. If you are caught in such a maelstrom of malice, step back and consider the situation carefully—is there really a problem here or are people just bored and looking for distraction?

In a nutshell: melodrama, shallowness, gossip, backstabbing



Four of Winter



Winter storms rise suddenly in the fairies' country, with raging winds and blinding snow. This fairy has been caught far from home on an icy night. Luckily, he found a rough shelter that will serve until morning, and it is a relief to give up the struggle with the elements for a while and rest. There is nothing more he can do now, as he can travel no further in the storm. There is no point in worry or planning what happens next. With a sigh, he wraps his wings close about him and sinks into a deep winter sleep.

When you get this card in a reading:

When you are in the midst of conflict, taking a time-out can often lead to greater clarity and a solution to the strife. Find a place of quiet sanctuary for yourself, either literally or by simply refusing to engage in any more discussion for the time being. There is nothing more to be gained by pursuing the problem at the present time. Call a truce. Rest and restore your sense of center.

In a nutshell: respite, sanctuary in times of trouble, a temporary peace



Five of Winter



Bored and looking for trouble, some fairy hooligans have come upon two young hedgehogs innocently foraging for food. The fairies jeer and laugh as they torment the poor creatures, using bare rose stems as weapons— the rose of love in summer turned to an instrument of hate in winter. The fairy boys don't intend to kill the hedgehogs; they just enjoy the sport of cruelty at the animals' expense. It is in no way a fair fight, as the only defense

the terrified hedge-piggies have is to curl up tightly and hope the bullies tire of their heartless game.

When you get this card in a reading:

You may win in the present situation, but at what cost to your sense of self-respect or to your reputation? There is no honor in conquering the helpless, and those who bully for entertainment are beneath contempt. If you are the one on the receiving end of the attack, you may need to seek help to stand up for yourself.

In a nutshell: unfair fight, lack of ethics or honor, bullying



Six of Winter



Strife and quarreling among the Winter Court have become too much for this group of fairies. With regret, they are choosing to leave their home and search for a place of peace. Swans have been said to carry the souls of the dying to their final rest, but this swan is taking fairy refugees to a new life. Gliding through the frigid waters, the fairies shelter in the warmth of snowy feathers, taking only the few possessions they can carry. It is a sad leave-

taking, but hope for the future and the comfort of loving company make the journey more bearable.

When you get this card in a reading:

It takes courage to leave a bad situation—to make a final break and seek a new life. Whether through divorce, quitting a job, giving up on a failed enterprise, or releasing a long-held dream, the first step in creating something better is to turn your back on what does not work. Fears and doubts will fall away as you look toward the future with hope.

In a nutshell: retreat, abandoning a bad situation, hope for a better future



Seven of Winter



In autumn, the fairies harvest and preserve food for the coming winter. A few comestibles, such as milk, are acquired in other ways—not to put too fine a point on it, the fairies steal these from humans. It does little harm and even adds a bit of charm to the mortals' lives. But for fairies to steal from other fairies is unconscionable. The winter storehouses are communal, and everyone in the Winter Court depends on the provisions to see them through the long, cold months. This fairy rogue doesn't care

about that— he's just looking out for himself. With the help of his sly henchman, he scurries away with his ill-gotten goods.

When you get this card in a reading:

Someone is trying to pull a fast one—to get away with something by cheating or outright theft. Or perhaps you are the one whose actions need addressing. Sometimes villains try to justify their misdeeds by claiming they are just settling the score, as the fairy stealing milk is re-stealing something that has already been stolen. But as we all know, two wrongs don't make a right.

In a nutshell: theft, sneakiness, betrayal, ethical violations compounding other ethical violations



Eight of Winter



Stuck inside for far too long by wintry weather, fairy children become fractious and full of naughty mischief. This hapless parlor maid is beset upon by the children of the household, and she finds this particular parlor game less than enjoyable. Circumstances of class and obligations of employment keep her from protesting—or do they? She has let herself become a victim and an object of fun to these thoughtless children. She fears that speaking up for herself could jeopardize her position. Though

longing to shake off her captors and return to her duties, the fairy maid stands resigned to her fate.

When you get this card in a reading:

Your position is untenable, and you may find it hard to imagine anything better. Staying stuck in circumstances that are not conducive to your welfare can lead to a state of affairs like that in the Burning Oak card, where the universe blasts you out of a bad situation because you did not take action on your own behalf. It is time to open your eyes, let go of denial, and stop being a victim.

In a nutshell: passivity, subservience, victimization, lack of direction



Nine of Winter



Long winter nights in the darksome fairy wood give rise to terrors of all kinds. This fairy lady has awakened from a nightmare to find that her worst fears are right outside her window. Hungry weasels circle and scratch at her dwelling, and any of them could make quick work of the delicate fairy within. But though the situation appears dire, the fairy is actually quite safe in her warm bed, and no icy tooth or claw can reach her. The trembling fairy can't grasp

this thought or dispel her anxiety. She is trapped by the fear within more surely than she is trapped by the snarling vermin without.

When you get this card in a reading:

The fears that seize us in the wee hours are the most debilitating. Exhaustion and vulnerability gnaw at the spirit, and there is nothing practical to be done to dispel the terrors until morning comes. If you are caught in such a cycle of fears, try to separate what is only nightmare from what is actually happening. Calm yourself, seek comfort, and wait for the dawn.

In a nutshell: fear, nightmare, helplessness, the dark night of the soul



Ten of Winter



Not all relationships between fairies and animals are benign. Some creatures are fiercely territorial and do not welcome intruders. Here we see a fairy man who has wandered too close to a badger's sett. Its occupant charges forward from beneath the earth, roaring in fury. Fleeing from this fearsome adversary, the fairy is caught in a thicket of icy thorns, trapped between the badger's wrath and the dagger-sharp barbs. The bare winter landscape offers no refuge. His wings are torn and useless.

Exhausted, defeated, and sobbing with fear and grief, the fairy has met his doom.

When you get this card in a reading:

While the Nine of Winter shows fears that are nothing more than fears, the Ten of Winter shows fears that are realized. You can release all the negative fantasies that have been whirling through your mind—this is as bad as it gets. It is time to assess the damage and take a good, hard look at the situation, with no delusion or denial. In the metaphor of the battlefield, it is time to bury your dead and attend to the wounded. If this card is drawn in answer to a question about a future choice, the answer is clear: don't disturb the badger.

In a nutshell: disaster, misfortune, the end of delusion and denial



Spreads

*The sages say Dame Truth delights to dwell,
Strange mansion! in the bottom of a well.
Questions are, then, the windlass and the rope
That pull the grave old gentlewoman up.*



JOHN WOLCOT





A Fleeting Glimpse of Fairy (One-Card Reading)

Sometimes just a single card can give the most profound reading, for its essence is focused and its meaning can be deeply comprehended. Mix your cards in the way you prefer and fan them out face-down on the table before you. Move your non-dominant hand over the cards (your left hand if you are right-handed, or vice versa) until you feel a tingle. This is a fairy tugging at you! Quickly take the card your hand is above and turn it over. Let its first impression speak to you, then take some time to enter into the scene and engage with the fairies there.

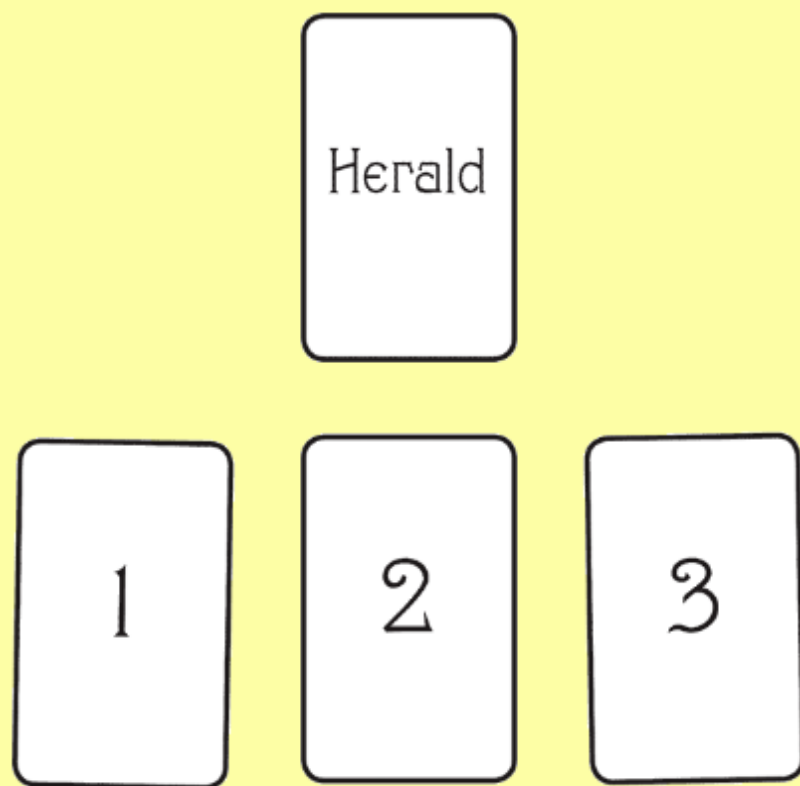
This can be done as a daily reading, and if so, you can look at the card as you choose it or leave it face-down and look at it when the day is over. These are two different ways of seeing and understanding: looking as you go and looking back.

You could also choose two daily cards: one for what to be aware of as you go about your day and one to look at later.

The Herald's Welcome (A Seasonal Spread)

The beginning of each new season is a perfect time to do a tarot reading. This three-card reading can be done for yourself, and it's also effective for work with a group, going around a circle and each pulling a card for the questions in turn. The fairies use a traditional calendar for the advent of their seasonal courts: Spring begins on Imbolc (February 1), summer on Beltane (May 1), autumn on Lammass (August 1), and winter on Samhain (October 31). If you prefer, you can use the solstices and equinoxes instead, which are traditionally the midpoint of the season.

To begin, take the Herald card for whichever season you are reading for, and place it at the center of your table. The herald welcomes the new season and calls in the Fairy Court to take its place as ruler of the months to come. Then mix the remaining cards and lay out three cards for the appropriate seasonal questions.



Spring:

- **The seed:** What is stirring deep within?
- **The sprout:** What is emerging?
- **The tender blossom:** What needs nurturing?

Summer:

- **The flowering tree:** What potential is awakening in you?
- **The setting of fruit:** How can you begin to manifest it?
- **The quickening heat:** What will encourage its success?

Autumn:

- **Gathering:** What opportunity awaits you?
- **Preserving:** How will you sustain its blessings?
- **Giving thanks:** How will you give back in gratefulness?

Winter:

- **Darkness:** What needs quiet contemplation?
- **Ice:** What needs to be clarified?
- **Wind:** What needs to be released?

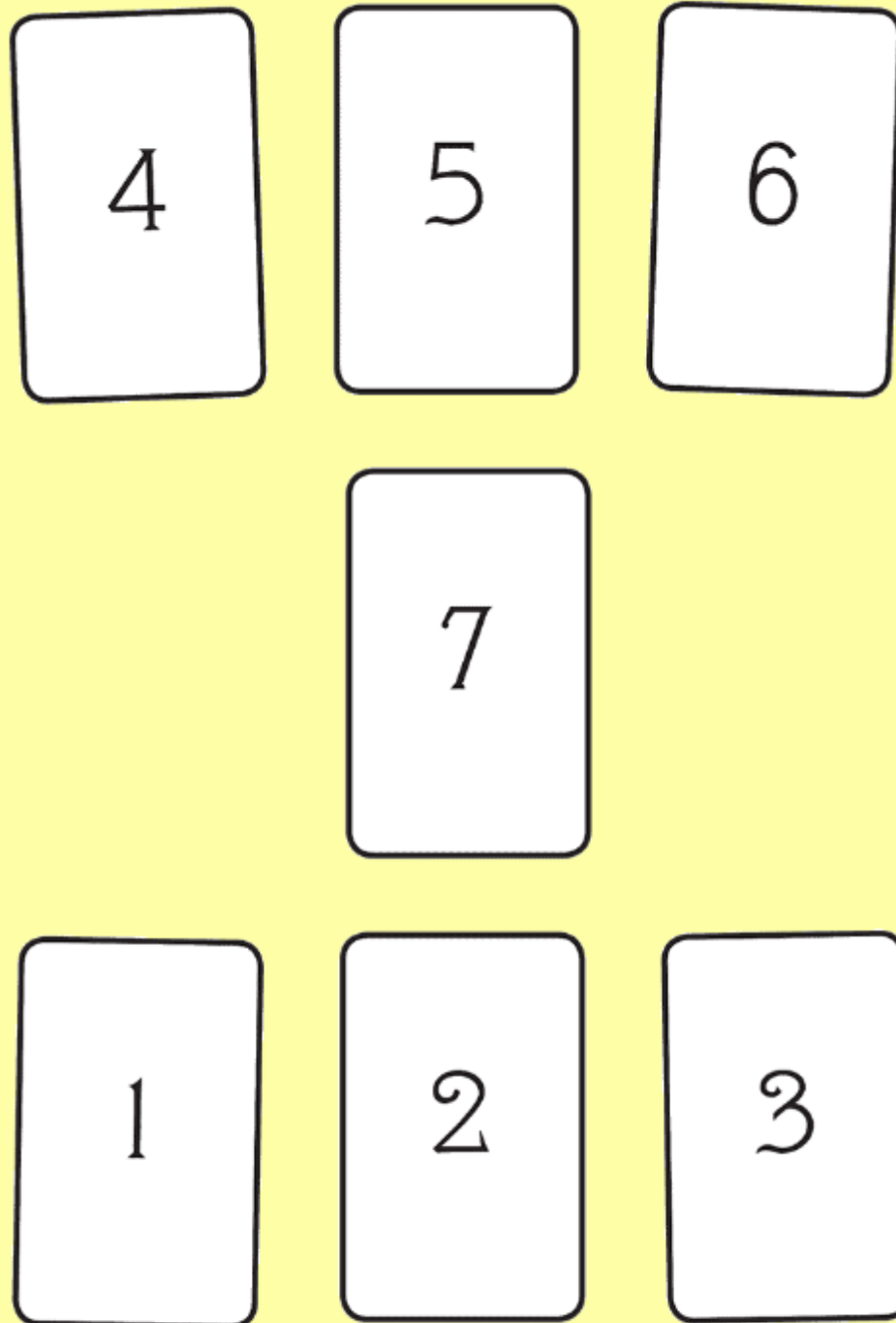
When your reading is done, be sure to reward the Herald's messages by sharing some seasonal treat!

Titania's Dream

This spread is inspired by a passage from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which also greatly inspired Victorian fairy artists, especially the image of Titania, queen of the fairies, asleep in her wooded bower:

*I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine:
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight.*

Using the Victorian language of flowers, this spread weaves an illuminating dream to help you clarify the next steps on your path. Mix your deck and lay out seven cards as shown:



1. **Wild thyme** (“**activity**”): What action will bring you delight?
2. **Oxlips** (“**pensiveness**”): What needs more meditation and thought?
3. **Violet** (“**faithfulness**”): What requires your devotion?
4. **Woodbine** (“**loving friendship**”): Who supports your dream?
5. **Musk rose** (“**capricious beauty**”): What is not as it seems?
6. **Eglantine** (“**poetry**”): What requires expression?
7. **Titania’s dream**: Where will your dream take you?

The Dance of Happiness Spread

*Fairies never say, "We feel happy":
what they say is, "We feel dancey."*

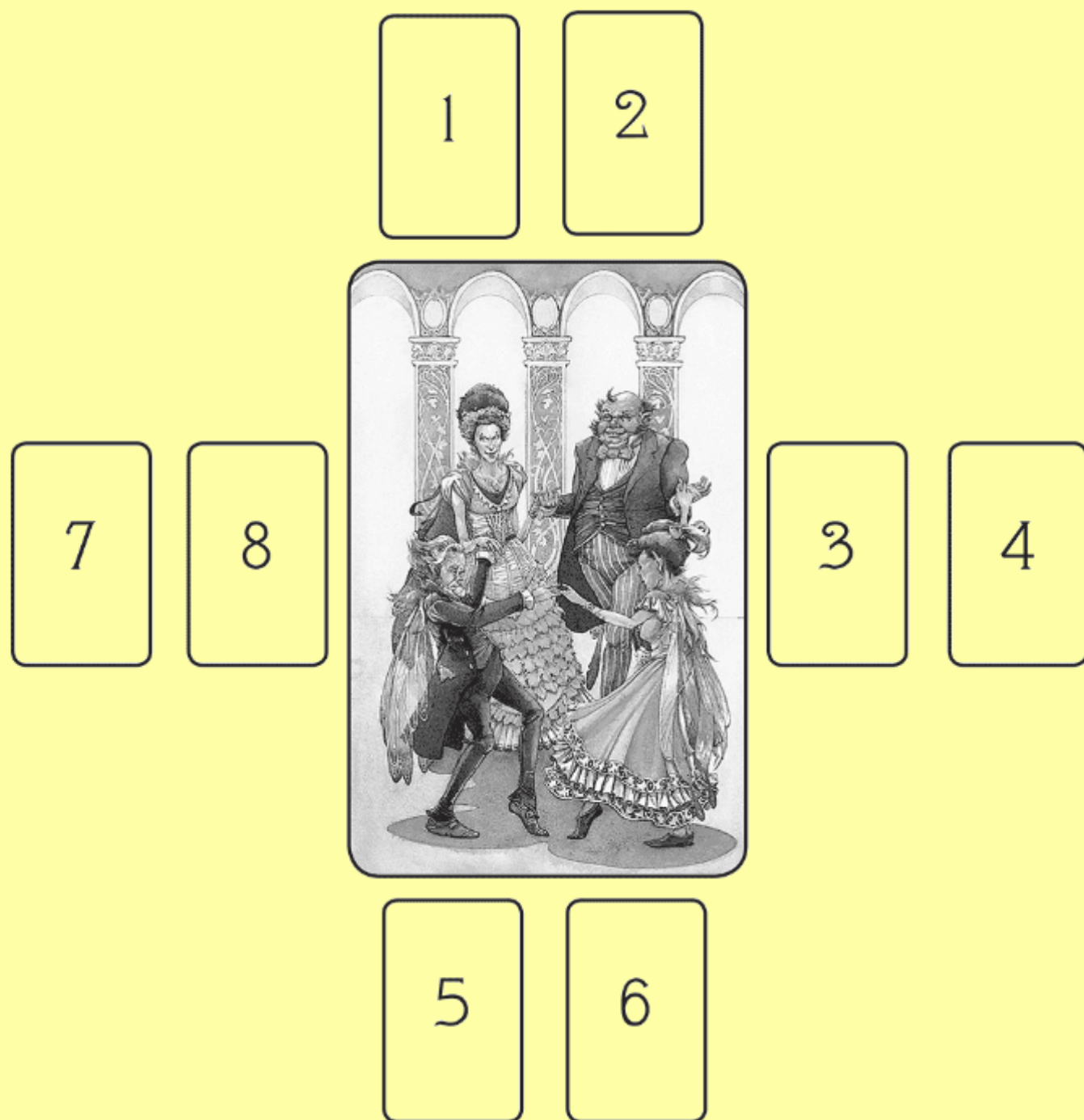


J. M. BARRIE

Are you feeling un-dancey? This spread will help you sort out your feelings and lead you toward a happier disposition.

Dancing in the Victorian era was a mix of "set" dances, with their complicated patterns and changes of partners, and "round" dances, where one lady and one gentleman stayed together throughout the dance, such as a waltz (quite scandalous in its debut). The most ambitious of the set dances was the cotillon, also called "the German." *The Dance of Society*, published in 1879, described 102 possible figures that could be included in the cotillon, which typically concluded a ball with hilarious romping. To be the lead couple was a great honor and a sign of unsurpassed popularity and social success. The fairies might be able to undertake all 102 complicated figures in a single evening's dance. This spread of eight cards based on eight figures from the cotillon is perhaps more manageable for mere mortals.

To begin, take the Four of Spring card and place it at the center. This card shows two fairy couples dancing the cotillon, and they will act as lead couples to direct your movement through the dance. Mix the remaining cards in your usual way and lay them out as shown here:



1. **Le Mouchoir Entortillé (The Twisted Handkerchief):** *What is worrying you?*
2. **Le Miroir (The Mirror):** *How does your self-image affect your happiness?*
3. **Les Masques (The Masks):** *What roles do others play in your happiness?*
4. **Les Mains Mystérieuses (The Mysterious Hands):** *What gift is offered to assist you?*

5. **Les Bras Entrelaces (The Arms Entwined):** *Who is supporting you?*
6. **Le Rond Trompeur (The Deceiving Circle):** *What is not as it seems?*
7. **L'Allée Tournante (The Winding Alley):** *What is the next step you can take toward happiness?*
8. **Le Rond Final (The Final Round):** *What will happiness look like when it comes?*

The Bow (gentlemen) and the Curtsy (ladies): *Give thanks for the dance!*

Afterword



Why Believe in Fairies?

We live in cynical times. If photographs of fairies were to appear today, they would be dismissed instantly as trickery, and perhaps that would be true. The loss for us is not in capturing real fairies on film, but rather in not holding real fairies in our hearts. Being technologically savvy or scientifically enlightened doesn't mean there isn't a place for fairies in our world. It doesn't have to be either/or; we don't have to choose between industry and imagination. When the Victorians admired paintings of the fairy folk or left wee offerings of cream or were wary of stepping into a ring of mushrooms, they didn't abandon their connection to rational thought. They just wanted to believe in something that was wild, beautiful, and magical.

As Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote in his book about the Cottingley fairies:

Victorian science would have left the world hard and clean and bare, like a landscape in the moon; but this science is in truth but a little light in the darkness, and outside that limited circle of definite knowledge we see the loom and shadow of gigantic and fantastic possibilities around us...

It is good to leave a little mystery intact—something that can't be analyzed or examined too closely, something that depends on faith to keep it alive. Let us balance worldly cynicism with wonder,

slowing down the rush of the modern age from time to time to the pace of a long summer twilight in a wood filled with fairy music.

Appendix



The Language of Flowers

In the Victorian era, messages were conveyed by subtle means: flirting a fan across a crowded ballroom, folding the corner of a calling card, and, of course, offering a gift of flowers. The Victorians took centuries-old symbolism of plants and made it the fashion. The choice of a particular flower could speak of love, grief, jealousy, admiration, betrayal, indifference, and myriad other emotional states that were difficult to express aloud while observing the proprieties of the time. We still have some knowledge of the language of flowers—red roses for passionate love, for instance—but the Victorians had hundreds of associations for flowers and plants, a complex code that added to the intrigue of romance and the tenderness of friendship.

Living in intimate contact with nature, our Victorian fairies are fluent in the language of flowers. Many of the cards in this deck feature flowers or trees with significant meanings, and these are mentioned in the card descriptions. Here is a list of the plants used in the Victorian Fairy Tarot and their traditional meanings:

Anise...Dreams
Beech tree...Prosperity
Belladonna...Silence
Birch...Renewal, purification
Blackthorn..."I bring difficulty"
Bluebell...Enchantment
Bridal roses...Happy love

Celandine...Joys to come
Eglantine...Poetry
Enchanter's nightshade...Sorcery
Fennel...Strength
Forget-me-not...True love
Hawthorn...Hope
Hazel...Wisdom
Holly...Immortality, rebirth, foresight
Honeysuckle..."The color of my fate"
Larkspur...Lightness, levity
Lily of the valley...A return to happiness
Mistletoe..."I surmount difficulties"
Moonflower..."I dream only of love"
Musk rose...Capricious beauty
Myrtle...Abiding love
Oak...Stability, wisdom
Opium poppy..."Sleep is my bane"
Oxlips...Pensiveness
Pansy...Thoughts
Pear tree...Affection, comfort
Primrose...Youth
Pyrus japonica (fairy fire)...Temptation
Red clover...Industry
Rowan...Protection
Rudbeckia...Justice
Rue...Disdain
Spearmint...Virtue
Sunflower...Adoration
Sweet violet...Modesty
Violet...Faithfulness
Water lily...Purity of heart
Wheat...Riches
Wild daisy..."I will think of it"
Wild plum...Independence
Wild rose...Ambassador of love
Wild thyme...Activity

Willow...Mourning
Woodbine...Loving friendship
Wormwood...Bitterness



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Acknowledgments



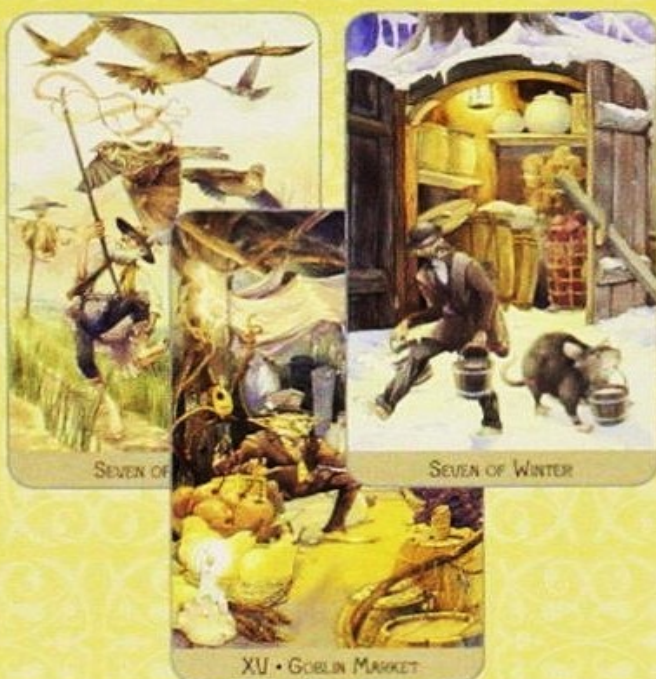
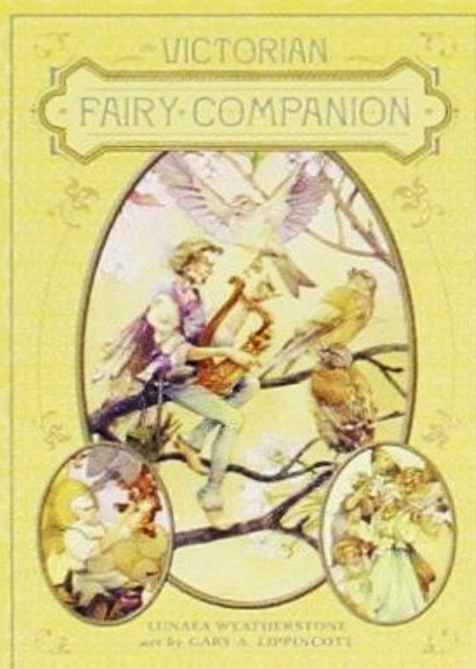
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